THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

(Daf' Shubah al-Tashbīh bi-Akaff al-Tanzīh)

by

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AL-MAKTABA AL-AZHARIYYA LI AL-TURĀTH'S INTRODUCTION

It is He who has sent down to you, [O Muḥammad], the Book; from it are verses, which are decisive—they are the foundation of the Book—and others are ambiguous. As for those in whose hearts is deviation [from truth], they will follow that of it which is ambiguous, seeking discord and seeking its meaning. And no one knows its [true] meaning except God. But those that are firm in knowledge say, "We believe in it" (Qur'ān 3:7).

ALL PRAISE BELONGS to God who guided us to a straight path through the declaration void of anthropomorphism and denial [of God's attributes]. And, may peace and blessings be upon our master Muḥammad ﷺ, who forbade the worship of idols and statues.

This is a book of Ibn al-Jawzī that a faction—like those the author refuted—concealed from us until now. They also concealed it from many of those who specialize in Arabic works, and they strove to efface its name and all traces of it. The spread of the books of the anthropomorphists amongst the people—their manuscripts and publications, and the preoccupation of some writers with calling to anthropomorphism until the present day—induced me to publish it. It was also done out of eagerness to propagate the beneficial writings of Ibn al-Jawzī and his enjoyable books of polemics.

And, the Ustādh Shaykh Muḥammad Zāhid al-Kawtharī—the guest of Cairo—commented on it. May God eternalize the benefit taken from him.

AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

KNOW—MAY GOD, the Exalted, help you—that when I pursued the *madhhab* of Imām Aḥmad, may God the Exalted have mercy on him, I found him to be of great stature with respect to the sciences. He excelled in the study of the juridical sciences and the views of the predecessors (*Salaf*) to the point that not a single matter arises that he does not have a scriptural reference for or some form of remark to make. However, because he adheres to the approach of the *Salaf,* he only wrote what they transmitted. Therefore [it was only natural that] I found his *madhhab* void of the literary compositions whose kind was numerous amongst those [scholars] who follow a different approach [than him]. So, I wrote some detailed exegeses. Amongst them are: *al-Mughnī* [that exists] in [several] volumes, *Zād al-Masīr, Tadhkirat al-Arīb* and others.

Concerning the sciences of ḥadīth [I wrote a number of] books, among them are: *Jāmi' al-Masānīd, al-Ḥadā'iq, Naqī al-Naql* and many books regarding *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl* (the science of weighing positive and negative factors for evaluating the reliability of ḥadīth narrators). I have not found the Ḥanbalīs to have a single commentary in the topic of comparative *fiqh* except that al-Qāḍī Abū Ya'lā said: "I used to say, 'what is it with the advocates of the *madhhabs* that they mention the variance of those who have opposing views but they do not bother to mention the views of Aḥmad.'[1]

[1] Imām Aḥmad kept the company of Abū Yūsuf at the start of his [scholastic] career as Yaḥyā ibn Ma'īn says about him in his book, *Ma'rifa al-Tārīkh wa al-'Ilal*, "I heard Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal say, 'I kept the company of Abū Yūsuf, and then I kept company with others after his time.'" Aḥmad used to preoccupy himself with the books of Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan and would extract some abstruse responses from them according to what al-Khaṭīb related with his chain of transmission to al-Ḥarbī on his authority. He [also] accompanied many of the jurists of Iraq, and sat with Shāfi'ī during his second visit to Baghdād after the demise of Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan. So he acquired an ample portion of *fiqh*. Despite all of this, his greater focus and the focus of his disciples was upon the narration of ḥadīth. [In this regard] he did not follow the methodology of the jurists in the matters of *fiqh* [*al-tafrī'*], designating its sources, and elucidating the points of legality of judgments and assigning them [to their particular places] to the point that it was rare that he had a unique view and differed from those *fuqahā* who came before him in a particular ruling of *fiqh* (*fī al-furū'*). So if he differed with Shāfi'ī for example in anything from his new school you would see him agreeing with Abū Ḥanīfa or one of his disciples or Mālik, may God be pleased with them. So the authors of the books of comparative *fiqh* found it negligible to mention the views of Aḥmad by simply mentioning the variance of the jurists who came before him.

Then, I forgave them, since we [Ḥanbalīs] do not have a single commentary on *fiqh*, so, I wrote a commentary for them."

[In spite of Abū Ya'lā's attempts] in his commentary, he neither clarified what was *ṣaḥīḥ* (rigorously authenticated) nor did he express contention with the rejected [sayings]. He also mentioned some irregular analogies,[2] and I witnessed one of our companions delivering a lesson while taking recourse to the commentaries of Iṣṭilām, As'ad, 'Āmili, and Sharīf while borrowing things from them [in spite of being unreliable sources]. So, I composed some commentaries for them such as: *Kitāb al-Inṣāf fī masā'il al-Khilāf* ("Impartiality About Matters of Disagreement"); *Jannat al-Naẓar wa Junnat al-Faṭr* ("Garden of Contemplation and Armor Against Fissure") and *'Umda al-Dalā'il fī Mashhūr al-Masā'il* ("Reliance of All Proofs Regarding the Popular View of All Issues"). Then I deemed it appropriate to gather the ḥadīths of the commentary (of Qāḍī Abū Ya'lā) by which the advocates of the different *madhhabs* present as proof, and I clarified the basis for that which is sound and the point of contention in that which has been contested. I then composed a book about the [Ḥanbalī] *madhhab* that incorporated these ḥadīths, calling it *al-Bāz al-Ashhab al-Munqaḍḍ 'alā Mukhalifī al-Madhhab* ("The Flaming Falcon Swooping Down on the Dissenters of the [Ḥanbalī] School"). In the science of the branches of *fiqh,*

The recording of his views alongside the views of the other jurists in the books of comparative *fiqh* did not become widespread until the time of Ibn Hubayra al-Wazīr. When he published his *Ifsāh* and specified a sizable volume amongst its volumes to the variance of the four Imāms, he gave it complete attention, and strove to spread it by spending enormous sums, [so much so, that] those who wrote in the area of comparative *fiqh* began to mention the views of Aḥmad alongside the views of the other Imāms. Ibn Jarīr reached him in age and met his disciples, and despite that he did not mention his views in what he wrote regarding the variance of the jurists while mentioning those who were of the likes of Abū Bakr 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Kīsān Aṣamm. So the Ḥanbalīs asked him about that, and he said the like of which is: "Aḥmad was not one of the jurists. Rather he was from the people of ḥadīth. And since I did not meet him, I could not learn from him nor have I met any of his disciples who were worthy of learning anything from." So the agitation of the Ḥanbalīs was incited against him. Then what Yāqūt mentions in *Mu'jam al-Udabā* and Ibn Kathīr mentions in his *Kāmil* occurred [about that incident].

[2] Translator: A proper legal analogy cannot be applied if the reason justifying the ruling or point of legality is undiscerned. Amongst the conditions for determining the proper point of legality, is for the designated point of legality to be a description that is consistent throughout and suitable as a justification for the ruling being applied. When it happens that the determined point of legality is a description that is consistent throughout in all that it is being applied to, but is not suitable as a justification for the ruling—like saying that the reason that wine is forbidden is because it is wine, such a legal analogy is said to be irregular.

I wrote *Kitāb al-Mudhhib fī al-Madhhab* ("The Gilder Regarding the Madhhab"), *Masbūk al-Dhahab* ("Moulded Gold") and *al-Bulgha* ("The Means of Subsistence"). In the fundamentals of the religion, I wrote *Minhāj al-Wuṣūl ilā 'ilm al-Uṣūl* ("The Way of Reaching Knowledge of the Religious Fundamentals"). In total, so far I have written some 250 works.

I have observed that some of our companions have written about matters of creed in a way that is not proper. There are three in particular: Abū 'Abd Allāh ibn Ḥāmid,[3] his disciple, Qāḍī Abū Ya'lā,[4] and Ibn al-Zāghūnī[5] who composed books by which they have disgraced the *madhhab*. They held the attributes of God to be subject to human understanding and perception. They heard that God, Glorified and Exalted be He, created Adam on his[6] image, upon him be blessing and peace. On that basis, they acknowledged for Him an image and a physical form, a face attributable to His essence, two eyes, a mouth, uvulas, molar teeth, and lights for His face which represent His majestic splendor, two hands, fingers, a palm, a little [pinky] finger, a thumb, a chest, a thigh, two shins, and two feet. [They even went so far as saying]: "We have not heard any mention of the head." They [then] said: "It is possible for Him to touch and to be touched, and to bring the slave close to His being." One of them said: "[...] He breathes." Then they calm the common people by saying: "[These attributes] are not taken as commonly understood."

[3] He is the Shaykh of the Ḥanbalīs, Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥasan ibn Ḥāmid ibn 'Alī al-Baghdādī al-Warrāq who died in the year 403. He was one of their greatest authors. His *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-Dīn* contains serious errors some of which the author will mention. Qāḍī Abū Ya'lā was trained by him.

[4] He is Qāḍī Abū Ya'lā Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad ibn Khalf ibn al-Farrā al-Ḥanbalī who died in the year 458. According to Ibn al-Athīr and Abū al-Fidā, they reported that Abū Muḥammad al-Tamīmī said concerning him "Abū Ya'lā has severely disgraced the *madhhab*. The waters of the oceans cannot wash it away." In his *Ṭabaqāt*, Qāḍī Abū Ya'lā attributed to Imām Aḥmad unspeakable things, far from being true. Ibn Badrān Dushtī reported in the section of "Comfirming the Limit" from *Kitāb al-Uṣūl* of Abū Ya'lā what is more horrid than what the author will report about him in "al-Tashbīh" along with a clash occurring between exoneration and anthropomorphism in his statements. It is no secret to the observer that he is not the Abū Ya'lā Aḥmad ibn 'Alī al-Mawṣilī, the author of *al-Musnad*, and narrator of the books of Abū Yūsuf from Bishr ibn al-Walīd.

[5] He is Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn 'Ubayd Allāh ibn Naṣr Zāghūnī al-Ḥanbalī who died in the year 527. He is one of the shaykhs of the author. In his *Kitāb al-Īḍāḥ* he has some striking points of anthropomorphism that will dumbfound the astute person.

[6] Translator: This ḥadīth will be discussed in greater detail later on. It would suffice to say here that the word "his" in the ḥadīth "Verily God created Adam in his image" is unclear. If it is a reference to God—it would mean "God's image," and if it was in reference to Adam—it would be Adam's image. This ḥadīth is considered *mutashābih*. The traditional view is that "his" is in reference to Adam, upon whom be peace.

They adopted the literal meanings of the [illegible] called them *attributes*—an invented designation, of which they have no evidence, neither from transmitted knowledge of the text, nor reason. They did not carefully consider those texts that divert one's attention from adopting the literal meanings [of such expressions] to adopting those meanings that must necessarily apply to God, just as [they did not carefully consider] to negate the meanings implied by those literal expressions that are characteristics of finite beings. They were not satisfied with saying, "[It is] an attribute of action" until they said, "[It is] an attribute of the [Divine] essence [of God]." Once they determined those [words] to be attributes, they said, "We do not understand them according to the usages they imply according to language" like hand for 'blessing' and 'power' and coming/arriving to mean 'goodness' and 'kindness,' nor shin to mean 'severity.'" "Rather," they said, "We hold and understand them according to their well-acknowledged literal meanings," while the apparent and literal meaning is what is familiar of human characteristics.

But any text [of the Qur'ān and Sunna] is only held according to its literal meaning when it is possible and feasible. If something would reject or negate this being done, it is understood and held according to its figurative understanding. They then become offended when they are accused of likening God to His creation and show harshness towards anyone who says this to them, while in the same breath, insisting, "We are *Ahl al-Sunna*," (Upholders of the Prophetic Tradition) although in their statements they are clearly likening God to His creation.

There are some common people that have begun to follow them and I have advised them by saying, "Companions! Brothers! You are the People who adhere to the texts and follow them. This was the example of your Imām, the Greatest Imām, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, may God, Exalted be He, have mercy on him, who under pain of torture, proclaimed, 'How can I say what has not been said before?'" [7] So, take care not to introduce into

[7] Khallāl mentioned in *al-Sunna* with his chain of narration to Ḥanbal on the authority of his paternal uncle, Imām Aḥmad, that when Imām Aḥmad was questioned about the ḥadīths of the descent, the seeing, the placing of the foot and the like, he said concerning them that, "We believe in them, we declare them to be true, without how and [without] a meaning." When asked about the establishment, he also said, "He became established on the Throne how He pleased and as He pleased without [having] limitation or a description that could be understood." This is consignment [of its meaning to God] and exoneration as is the approach of the *Salaf*. Sometimes Imām Aḥmad would use *ta'wīl* (figurative interpretation) in some places as Ḥanbal also narrated on the authority of Imām Aḥmad that he

his *madhhab* what does not belong in it. Then, you [three] said about the ḥadīths [of attributes] "We hold them and understand them according to their apparent meanings," while the apparent meaning of [this word] 'the foot' would be the human limb. This is the same thing as what is said and believed by the Christians, may God, Exalted be He, distance them from His mercy [for saying such], about Jesus, upon him be blessing and peace. They understand that he is "God's spirit" and that God, Sanctified and Exalted in Highness, has an attribute known as a spirit that entered into Mary.

Whoever says, "He became established with His Divine essence" has made Him, Sanctified and Exalted is He, subject to reality, as we understand it.[8] It should not be neglected by anyone that the principle by which the faith is established is reason,[9] and it is by way of this [reason] that we came to know and hold God to be Eternal without beginning. If only you had said, "We read the ḥadīths, and [then] keep silent," then no one would have objected to [what] you [do]! [But you refuse to abstain from holding the texts and understanding them according to the apparent meaning] and this behavior is absolutely disgusting and repugnant.[10] So, do not

heard him say, "They made an argument against me on the day of the debate [during his famous inquisition by the rulers of his time]. They said: '*Sūrat al-Baqara* will come on the Day of Resurrection and *Sūrat Tabārak* will come.' Imām Aḥmad said: "So I said to them: 'It is merely the reward. God, Splendid is His mention, said: *And your Lord comes with the angels rank upon rank* (Qur'ān 89:22) and this means that His power will come." Ibn Ḥazm al-Ẓāhirī said in his *Faṣl*, "It has been related to us about Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, may God show him mercy, that he said concerning: *And your Lord comes*; Its meaning is: 'And the command of your Lord comes.'" This [here] is figurative interpretation and exoneration as is the approach of the generations directly after the *Salaf*. As for what has been reported about Imām Aḥmad that contradicts what has preceded, it is a fabrication of an ignorant friend and a faulty understanding of the view of Imām Aḥmad.

[8] This is due to the fact that "establishment" for humans is always understood in the sense of sitting. Those who would say that God, literally in His essence, is on the Throne would therefore be affirming that God is held, carried, borne and sitting or some other human act.

[9] Translator: Here he is making a reference to the rule determined by the scholars of *Uṣūl al-Dīn* which says, "Reason is a root for revealed knowledge. So raising contention with reason would be to raise contention with revealed knowledge. And contention with the root to correct the branch necessitates contention with both of them together."

[10] While commenting on [a book entitled] *al-'Aḍudiyya*, Ustādh Shaykh Muḥammad 'Abduh, may God show him mercy, in discussing the ḥadīth about the dispersion of the Umma [into 73 sects], said, "So if you said: 'Surely the speech of God and the speech of the Prophet ﷺ is composed of Arabic expressions and its indications are known to the scholars of language,' it is therefore compulsory to hold by the true indication of the expression whatever the case may be," I would say: "If that is so, then there would be none who are saved but the literalist party of Anthropomorphists who deem it obligatory to adopt all of

introduce in the *madhhab* of this righteous *Salafī*[11] man what does not belong to it. You have made this *madhhab* such a shameful disgrace that when it is said, "Ḥanbalī," it is understood that he is someone who likens God to His creation. You have then made your way to be that of bigotry and intolerance, showing fanatical support for Yazīd ibn Mu'āwiya, when you well know that the founder of the *madhhab* permitted cursing him.[12]

the unambiguous texts and to abandon research altogether, despite the disarray found in the opinions of this faction, which is not hidden. Despite their pursuit of a path that does not produce certainty in any way. Verily there are occasions for the different addresses that appear in accordance with them. So there is no other way but to employ research and to interpret (*ta'wīl*) what reveals an imperfection—by its appearance—to what produces perfection. And when the interpretation proves true regarding something because of the evidence, it holds true regarding the remainder of things whereas no distinction can be made between one proof and another, or one expression and another."

Translator: Apparently, what Shaykh Muḥammad 'Abduh means here is that, if the Arabic language is composed of both literal and non-literal expressions, and the Qur'ān is in the Arabic language then, it would by extension mean that the Qur'ān is composed of literal and non-literal expressions. Furthermore, it would be permissible to say that if one expression mentioned in the Qur'ān (which could also be applied to other than God) is taken to be figurative, then a similar expression refered to God can also be taken to be figurative. An example of this is God's saying: *And lower to them the wing of humility out of mercy* (Qur'ān 17:24). Since no one acknowledges this to mean that man has a wing, one should also not deduce from God's saying: *God's hand is over their hands* (Qur'ān 48: 10) that He has a hand. Both are expressions open to interpretation, and as thus, one cannot determine for certain what exactly is intended by them. The duty of the believer is to cling to the portions of those verses and ḥadīths that contain injunctions subject to being applied in one's everyday life. If the interpretation of a text does not help bring us closer to God, there is no benefit in trying to assign to it what cannot be for a surety. And God knows best.

[11] Translator: Imām Aḥmad was a *Salafī* Imām. This merely means that he avoided the interpretation of those verses and ḥadīths which leave an impression that God resembles His creation and has a body or body parts unless it was absolutely necessary as when it is feared that someone will apply them literally to God. This was the way of the *ṣaḥāba* in general and the *tābi'ūn*. It does not mean that Imām Aḥmad called himself *Salafī*, although he was refered to as such by the author.

[12] Translator: Qāḍī Abū Bakr Ibn al-'Arabī writes in *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, "As for the specific sinner, it is not permissible to curse him by agreement, because of what has been related about the Prophet ﷺ. A drunkard was brought to him a number of times and one of those present said: "What is wrong with him? May God curse him! How many times has he come into your presence?!" Then the Prophet ﷺ said: "Do not be supporters of Satan against your brother!" So he gave to him the sanctity of brotherhood, and this necessitates compassion. This is a sound ḥadīth. As for cursing the non-specific sinner, it is the third issue: It is permissible by unanimous consensus, because of what has been related in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* [of Bukhārī] about the Prophet ﷺ who said: "May God curse the thief. He steals the egg and has his hand cut off." (Qur'ān 2:161) What we notice in the words of Ibn al-'Arabī

And, Abū Muḥammad Tamīmī[13] used to say about one of your Imāms, that "[he] has disgraced the *madhhab* in a terrible way and it will not be cleansed until the Day of Resurrection."

is that when he makes mention of the agreement about the impermissibilty of cursing the specific sinful Muslim, he uses the term for agreement, 'اتفاقا,' (*ittifāq*) which is usually used to indicate that a difference of opinion does exist but because there is so little discrepancy, little consideration is given to it. Based on what Ibn al-Jawzī mentioned concerning the view of Imām Aḥmad, one could conclude that his was the one isolated view that kept Ibn al-'Arabī from claiming unanimous agreement on the subject, which is indicated by the term, consensus (*ijmā'*). And God knows best. Whatever the case, the Ḥanbalīs were sharply divided over the matter of Yazīd. Some of them were staunch defenders of him and did not agree with the claim that Imām Aḥmad permitted cursing him. Others, like Ibn al-Jawzī, rejected and repudiated Yazīd for his behavior. A third faction of the Ḥanbalīs remained neutral on the subject.

[13] Translator: Swartz mentions that he was Rizq Allāh ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Tamīmi. He states that he was "an influential and well-connected member of the Ḥanbalī school of Baghdād whom Ibn al-Jawzī clearly held in high regard." For biographical details, see *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanabila*, II, 250–251; *Muntaẓam*, IX, 88–89; *Dhayl*, I, 77–85, *Kāmil*, X, 253; *Shadarāt*, III, 384; and Ibn al-Jawzī, *Manāqib Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal*, 525. See Merlin Swartz, *A Medieval Critique of Anthropomorphism* (Brill: Lieden, 2002) p. 125, footnote 181.

ERRORS OF THE AFOREMENTIONED ḤANBALĪS

After examination, it can be seen that the scholars we have been discussing erred in seven matters:

The first issue is that they called many of the ḥadīths "Information on Attributes." However, they are merely possessive forms, while not every possessive form is an attribute.[1] For surely, God, Exalted in Highness, said: [...] *and, I have blown into him from My spirit* (Qur'ān 15:29). And [know that] God does not have an attribute called "a spirit." So he who has called the possessive form an attribute is guilty of innovation.[2]

The second error is that they said, "These ḥadīths are amongst the ambiguous [and] none know [the true meaning] except God, Exalted be He." However, at the same time they state, "We bear and understand them

[1] Translator: What Ibn al-Jawzī is referring to, is that at times, God mentions things in the Qur'ān that He annexes to Himself, but are not from His essence, His attributes or His doings. For example, God has spoken about *The she-camel of God* (Qur'ān 7:73 and 91:13). No one should think that by reading this, God is riding the she-camel, or that it is from God's essence, His Names or His attributes. Rather, it is being attributed to Him by terms of possession and honor. The same could be said of the naming of the Ka'ba as the "House of God." No Muslim believes that God lives there or that it is His permanent abode, but rather, the possessive form of God connecting it to Himself is out of honor and that it is in His Possession as He is its Creator and Maintainer. This same form would exist in English if someone states, "John's house and car." No one would assume that the car or the house is part of John or that it is an attribute, but rather it belongs to John or it is something that is attributed to John due to honor.

[2] Translator: Ibn al-Jawzī highlights that each matter that the anthropomorphists referred to as being an attribute of God exists in the Qur'ān or the Sunna in the "construct phrase" or "possessive form" usually translated as "The ___of ___" or "The____'s_____," like "The hand of God" or "God's hand." They made the mistake of assuming that this made the particular limb an attribute of God, since many times the meaning being expressed in the construct phrase is the meaning expressing a relationship of possession or ownership. However, this is a mistake since it would also have to be said that God has a spirit, a house in which He lives, and a camel that He rides, as these are also annexed to His name or pronoun in places in the Book of God and the Sunna. This is why Ibn al-Jawzī chose to call them "information on the attributes" or "the annexed reports," rather than "verses on the attributes" as many scholars have chosen the latter expression.

according to their literal meanings." How astonishing! A phrase whose meaning only God knows [for certain], what literal meaning can it then have? What then are the literal meanings of *al-istiwā'* (establishment) except "sitting" and *al-nuzūl* (descending) anything but moving from one place to another?

The third error is that they affirmed attributes as belonging to God [that are not established by decisive evidence]. The attributes of God Almighty, Splendid in His Majesty, are only affirmed by the decisive proofs, by which the essence is affirmed.[3]

The fourth error is that they do not differentiate between affirming what is contained in a well-known report (a ḥadīth whose narrators are between three or four), like [the Prophet's] saying, "He, Exalted in Highness, descends to the sky of the lower world," and affirming what is present in a ḥadīth that is not sound, like his saying, "I saw my Lord in the most beautiful form." Rather, they affirmed an attribute using the former [ḥadīth] and also by using the latter ḥadīth, [which is not a valid approach].

The fifth error is that they did not make a distinction between a ḥadīth attributed to the Prophet ﷺ and a ḥadīth designated to a companion or successor.[4] Thus they affirm the second ḥadīth as if it belongs to the same category as the ḥadīth mentioned before it.

[3] Translator: Evidence is decisive when its manner of transmission is concurrent (*mutawātir*) and the wording of the report is not open to interpretation (*ṣarīh*). This is like God's saying: *Verily God is Self-Sufficient, Worthy of all praise* (Qur'ān 14:8) and: *God's hand is over their hand* (Qur'ān: 10). The former verse is clear and decisive, not subject to interpretation. The latter verse is ambiguous because it gives the impression that God has a hand, which happens to be a limb that facilitates for human beings the performance of a variety of tasks, while it can also be taken to be a metaphor indicating power, aid, and assistance. As for the first verse, every Muslim is obliged by it to believe that God has the attribute of "self-sufficiency," while the second verse obliges nothing more than to believe that God said: *God's hand is over their hand*. No one can coerce a Muslim by this verse to believe or say that God has a physical hand, just as one cannot force another to say that God does not have a hand. This is because God's attributes must be conveyed in a manner wherein all doubt is removed that it is one of His attributes, in addition to being conveyed in a way that removes all doubt that the transmitters might have agreed upon the transmission of a lie.

[4] Translator: The reason that it is not permissible to use the statement of a companion or successor to establish an attribute for God is that only the Prophet ﷺ has the right and authority to legislate and speak authoritatively about the Creator. In the absence of his approval, the statements of his companions are not binding, due to the fact that their views about the revelation are subject to error. However, if a statement made by a companion and successor is free of opposition from any of their peers and does not contradict any authoritative source or statement of another companion or successor it is then considered binding upon all to believe, according to the scholars of *Ahl al-Sunna*.

The sixth error is that they make it a point to interpret (*ta'wīl*) in some instances and object to do so in others. For example, [In the ḥadīth *Qudsi*, it states] [...] "Whoever comes to me walking [at a normal pace] I will come to him walking [quickly]"[5] to which they say, "He struck the similitude to figuratively express the benevolence He shows to His creatures," but in other reports, they insist on the literal meaning.

The seventh error is that they understand the ḥadīths according to human perception. They said, "He descends with His essence, relocates from place to place, and shifts," but then falsely state, "But not as we think." So, they confuse whoever should hear them and they insult the senses and human intelligence by holding the ḥadīths on meanings according to human perception.

It is for this reason that I considered it necessary [to answer the doubts raised by them, and] to refute them so that things such as this could not be attributed to Imām Aḥmad, may God have mercy on him. Had I remained silent, it would have been said that these things are likewise a part of my creed. [To delve into] a matter so serious to people does not frighten me, because all are expected to act in accordance with the evidence [and God has blessed me with ample proof] to understand when it comes to knowing [the signs and attributes] of the the One True God, Exalted be He. Uncritical imitation of a scholar without knowing his evidence is not allowed in that area.[6]

Imām Aḥmad, may God have mercy on him, was once asked about an issue, and he gave a legal verdict regarding it. When it was then said, "Ibn al-Mubārak does not hold this view," he replied, "Ibn al-Mubārak did not descend from Heaven." Imām Shāfi'ī, may God have mercy on him, said,

[5] *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (13:325 and 328) and *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Muslim* (No. 2675).

[6] Translator: *Taqlīd* in *fiqh* is compulsory for all who do not fulfill the conditions of absolute *ijtihād* (scholarly endeavor; competence to infer expert legal rulings). The view of most scholars is that *taqlīd* is impermissible in the area of creed (*'aqīda*), and specifically in those matters that relate to the character of God. In this regard we find the statement attributed to 'Abd Allāh ibn Mas'ūd, "Let no one subject his religion to the blind imitation of a person. If he believes, he will believe. And if he disbelieves, he will [also] disbelieve." Imām al-Ḥaramayn says in his *Shāmil*, "None have adopted the view that *taqlīd* in creedal matters (*uṣūl*) is permissible except for the Ḥanbalīs." Imām Abū Ishāq Isfarāyīnī said, "Only the literalists are in opposition to it (the impermissibility of *taqlīd* in creedal matters). See *Irshād al-Fuḥūl*: 2/348; also refer to *Rawḍa al-Nāẓir*: 382, *Musawwda*: 458, 460, *Iḥkām al-Aḥkām* of Āmidī: 4/446, and *Fawātiḥ al-Raḥamūt*: 2/643–645.

"I asked God to guide me to the right choice in refuting Imām Mālik, may God have mercy on him."[7]

Since these three [Ḥanbalī scholars] wrote their books, and Qaḍī [Abū Ya'lā] took it upon himself to document the [relative] ḥadīths [in his book], I have mentioned them according to his arrangement, and I prefaced them with the noble verses that have come in that regard.

What is Mentioned in the Glorious Qur'ān about the Subject?

God, Glorified and Exalted be He, said: *And the face of your Lord will remain* (Qur'ān 55:7).[8] The exegetes explain [this to mean], "Your Lord will remain." Likewise, they said about His saying, Exalted in Highness: *They seek His face* (Qur'ān 6:52) to mean: "They seek Him." Ḍahhāk and Abū 'Ubayda said [concerning] *Every thing will perish except His face* (Qur'ān 28:88), to mean, "[Everything will perish] that is, except Him."

Those we have raised objection to, hold the view that the face is an attribute characterized by a special name added to the essence. What proof do they have to claim this, when they have no point of reference except what they know, taken from human understanding and perception? By giving descriptions and understandings such as these, they [in turn] necessitate the ascription of parts [to God]. If their understanding were taken to its absolute ending, the verse would mean that His entire essence would perish except for His face. Ibn Ḥāmid said, "We do indeed affirm for God, Exalted be He, a face, but it is impermissible to affirm a head for him." My body shudders at the thought of someone being so bold as to mention such a thing. As he had already likened God with His Creation, what prevented him from likening [everything] but the head?!

Another [example of their approach is their understanding of His Words], Exalted be He: *And, so that you will be brought up on My eye* (Qur'ān 20:39) and: *Make the ark under Our eyes* (Qur'ān 11:37).[9] That is [to say],

[7] Translator: The point that Ibn al-Jawzī is demonstrating with these quotes is that these scholars submitted to the strength of evidence, not men, especially with regard to knowing the attributes of God.

[8] Zamakhsharī said in *al-Kashshāf*, "*The face of your Lord* is His being. The face is used to express the whole being and the essence. The indigents of Makkah would say: 'Where is a noble Arab face that will rescue me from degradation?'"

[9] Zamakhsharī says, "*in our Eyes* is [mentioned] in the place of a noun of circumstance with the meaning 'make it while being protected.' Its true meaning is '[do it] while being clothed with Our eyes.' It is as if God has eyes with him that escort him so that he does

"In a place of view from Us." He placed [the pronoun "Our"] in the plural only because the custom of the king is to say, "We commanded and we forbade." But, Qāḍī [Abū Ya'lā] held the view that the eye is an attribute added to the essence, while Abū Bakr ibn Khuzayma[10] preceded him in this matter. When commenting about the verse, he [Ibn Khuzayma] said, "Our Lord has two eyes by which He sees." Ibn Ḥāmid has also stated, "It is compulsory to believe that He has two eyes."

This [understanding] is an innovation for which they have no evidence! Similarly, they affirmed the eyes from mere contrast indication[11] from his saying ﷺ "He is not one-eyed."[12] But, the only thing intended [in this case] was to negate imperfection from Him, Exalted be He. Furthermore, when it is established that He does not divide into sections, there is no basis for what is imagined to be attributes.

They are also mistaken when they read His Words, Exalted in Highness: [...] *to what I created with My* [*two*] *hands* (Qur'ān 38:75).[13] The hand linguistically has the meaning of "a favor" and "good treatment." The statement

not stray in his work from the correct manner [of building], and so that none of his enemies would come between him and his work." Rāzī says in *Asās al-Taqdīs* while discussing the "eye": "Employing *ta'wīl* is unavoidable. That is to construe these words to mean 'greatness of care and supervision.' The 'face' as part of the beauty of the metaphor is stated to indicate that whoever cares, inclines toward, and desires a thing immensely, stares at it much [which is something done with the face]. So the word 'eye' that is an instrument for that staring, was an indirect expression employed to mean 'the greatness of care.'"

[10] He is Muḥammad ibn Ishāq ibn Khuzayma al-Nīsāpurī who died in the year 311. He is considered as one of the greatest scholars of ḥadīth. He avoided from indulging in matters of speculative theology and he would forbid his disciples from doing so. When some of the theoreticians forced him to enter into these [dangerously] critical matters his foot slipped and he came up with some unintelligible interpretations. May God pardon him!

[11] Translator: What is meant by contrast indication is that when a person negates the existence of one thing that has an opposite, then it is understood that the opposite thing is to be applied. So in this case, it is understood that the opposite of having one eye is to have two eyes. So since the Prophet ﷺ negated the possibility of God being one-eyed, the opponents of Ibn al-Jawzī understood from that that He must have two eyes. However, there is no decisive evidence in support of this. Not all scholars of legal theory and interpretation accept contrast indication as an authoritative proof.

[12] See the fiftieth ḥadīth for an extended discussion on this aspect of "one-eyed."

[13] Zamakhsharī says, "Verily the possessor of [two] hands executes most of his duties with his hands. So the work done with the hands began to overshadow the other duties that are executed with other than them to the point that it was said about the work of the heart: 'It is from what your hands have done.' Also to the point that it was said to he who has no hands: 'Your hands poured and your mouth blew.' And to the point that there does not remain a difference between you saying, 'this is what you did' and 'this is what your

of the Jews: *God's hand is restrained* (Qur'ān 5:64) may God, Exalted be He, distance His mercy from those [who said it], means, "Held back from spending." The hand (*yad*) is also "strength." The Arabs say, "He has a hand in this matter."

His saying: *Nay, His* [*two*] *hands are extended* (Qur'ān 5:64) means, "His favor" and "His power."[14] And His saying: [...] *to what I created with My hands* (Qur'ān 38:75) means, "With My power and My favor." Al-Ḥasan said, *God's hand is over their hands* (Qur'ān 48:10) means, "His graciousness and good treatment." This is the statement of the scholars that have researched and examined matters with precision.

But, Qāḍī [Abū Ya'lā] said, "The hands are two attributes of the essence called *al-yadāni*." This [view] is [the result of] behaving according to sheer opinion without an evidence to establish its authenticity. He [Qāḍī Abū Ya'lā] further said, "If Adam, upon him be blessing and peace, did not have an advantage over the remainder of animals by being created by the hand, which is an attribute, He would not have extolled and dignified him by mentioning it. He said, *with My hands.* [Had] it meant "power," he would have no advantage, [and nor would the pronoun "My" in "My hands"] have been placed in the dual ["My two hands"]."

We could explain [the above conclusion] by saying that on the contrary, there is such a convention in the language. The Arabs used to say,

hands did.'" Rāghib al-Aṣfahānī said in his *Mufradāt*, "His saying, Exalted in Highness: *from what Our hands have done* (Qur'ān 36:71) and: *to what I created with My hands* (Qur'ān 38:75) are His way of expressing that He assumes the responsibility of creating things through invention, which is solely His [doing], Mighty and Majestic. He made special mention of the 'hand' so that the meaning could take form, since it is the most splendid of limbs by which action is executed between us, therefore the special quality in the meaning would take form [in the mind], not so that we would imagine an equation [between God and His creatures]. It has been said that its meaning is: '[...] by My favor that I have prepared for them.' The [preposition] ب [with] in it is not like the ب [with] in their saying: 'I cut him with the knife.' Rather it is like their saying: 'He came out with his sword.' That means, 'his sword was with him.' Its meaning is: 'and with him are my worldly and heavenly favors that whenever he observes them, he reaches the greatest happiness through them.'" The most erudite Shaykh Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī said in his exegesis, *Maḥāsin al-Ta'wīl*, *"to what I created with My hands* means 'by Myself' without intervention through a father and mother."

[14] It says in *Asās al-Taqdīs* of the Renewer of the sixth century, al-Fakhr Rāzī, "And what produces the beauty of this metaphor is that the perfection of the state of this body part appears only with the attribute called 'power.' Since the aim of the hand is to achieve power, the name, 'power,' was applied to the hand, and because the instrument for granting a favor is the hand. In using the word 'hand' to mean 'favor' is a use of the cause to refer to the effect."

"He does not have two hands in this affair" meaning that, "He has no power in it whatsoever." 'Urwa ibn Ḥizām said, "So, they said: 'May God cure you. By God, we do not have two hands in what the ribs have concealed.'" As for their saying, "With that [being created with God's hand] He distinguished Adam from the animals," God, Exalted be He, said: [in contention to their claims] *We created for them, from what Our hands have done, cattle* (Qur'ān 36:71), and it did not indicate the granting of distinction to cattle over the remainder of animals.[15]

God, Exalted be He, said: *And, the sky, We built it with hands* (Qur'ān 51:47), which in this context means, "with strength." Then, God said He blew into Adam from His spirit. He did not mean an action that is to be taken literally from the language or that He formed Adam from His Own Being, By no means! The meaning [of the passage] is [no more than], "I blew." Here, the honor of the possessive form is enough, since it does not befit the Majesty of the Creator, Splendid is His Majesty, [to attribute or understand the passage on blowing the spirit] any other way than that [mentioned]. This is due to the fact that He is not in need of acting through a medium, nor is He in need of organs and limbs to take action or act by, since God, Exalted be He, is independent and not in need of the Creation by His essence.

[When one understands this, then they will know that] it is not proper that He be preoccupied with seeking to glorify [and elevate the rank of] Adam, upon him be blessing and peace, while being heedless of what the Originator, Glory be He, is truly deserving of in terms of being exonerated above having parts, or implements in acting, for these things are the descriptions of [created and flawed] composite bodies.

[In addition to this], one of the three [scholars also] believes that God touches, even [making the presumption] that He touched the clay of Adam with a hand, which is part of His essence. They did not fully consider that amongst all His creations are composite bodies that face other composite bodies that unite with them and influence their nature. [And these created bodies are also able to perform actions towards other creations or influence other things without the need to use other devices and means but rather touching that body directly.] Do you [men then honestly] think that God, Glorified and Exalted be He, who has made the acts of persons

[15] Translator: In other words, stating that God created Adam with His hand is not a statement to distinguish Adam from other creatures, therefore, there is no evidence that God has a physical hand.

and composite bodies able to have an effect on other objects that are at a distance [from them without touching them] while He is somehow in need of [doing an act of creation] using [the medium of] clay?![16] Whoever thinks in this contradictory way has already been refuted by His Statement, Exalted be He: *Verily, the parable of Jesus with God is like the parable of Adam. He created him from dust. Then, He said: Be! Then, it is* (Qur'ān 3:59).[17]

[They undoubtedly fall into error when looking at His words], Exalted be He: *And God warns you from His Self* (Qur'ān 3:28) and: *You know what is in my self, and I do not know what is in Your Self* (Qur'ān 5:116). The commentators explain the first passage to mean, "And God warns you from Him," and they said [while noting the second passage], "You know what is with me, and I do not know what is with You." The scholars that have researched and examined matters with critical precision said, "The meaning of the "self" here is God's essence. For the self of a thing is its essence.[18] But, Qāḍī [Abu Ya'lā] held the view that God has a self, and that it is an attribute added to His essence. This is a statement that can only lead to likening God with His Creation, for the essence has been declared as one thing and the self has been made another in addition to it.

[They have stumbled in their understanding of His statement], Exalted be He: *There is not like His likeness a thing* (Qur'ān 42:11).[19] The apparent

[16] Translator: The point that Ibn al-Jawzī is making is that God has created things that are able to exert influence on other things without touching them. A case in point is that of the squid, which is able to squirt its ink on an opponent and blind it, thus having an effect on it without touching it by way of its tentacles. Ibn al-Jawzī's point would then be, "Are we to assume that these creations are better than God (in this case, the squid) as they are able to influence things without touching, while God has to exert some part of his being to affect creation?" This would of course make God less than His Creation, for He would need means (in this case physical touching and not through His Will/Decision) in order to affect things and His Power would be bounded and insufficient.

[17] Translator: This majestically demonstrates that indeed God is greater than the squid and every other creation, for He creates without need as mentioned in the verse and without having to result to means, such as hands, limbs and the like.

[18] Translator: So one should not assume that God has a soul or a physical body on the basis of this verse.

[19] Zamakhsharī says in *al-Kashshāf*, "They said: 'The like of you is not stingy,' so they negated stinginess from the like of him. And they mean to negate it from his person (ذاته), and they wanted to exaggerate in doing that. So they took the path of indirect expression in doing it, because if they negate it from those who are equal to Him and from those who share His most special characteristics, they have negated it from Him too. [In a similar vein] when you say to the Arab: 'The Arabs do not break covenants.' It would be more eloquent than saying: 'You don't break.' Another example of it is their saying: 'His lusts

meaning of the statement is that He has a likeness, so there would be nothing like His likeness. However, this is not so. The meaning according to linguists is merely that the equal [of something] stands in the place of the thing itself. A person would say, "The like of me does not speak to the like of you." And, the meaning is merely, "There is nothing like Him."

[They have made mistakes in regards to His statement], Exalted be He: *The day that a shin will be laid bare* (Qur'ān 68:42).[20] The majority of scholars say, "He will bring to light a grave and intense matter," and they would recite, "And the war stood up on a shin."[21] [That is, it intensified]. Another said, "And if the war turns its garment up over its shin [. . .]." Ibn Qutayba said, "The origin of this is that when a man falls into a significant matter that requires the effort of seriousness in it, he rolls up [his garments] from his shin. Thereafter, the shin was used as a metaphor in place of adversity." This is also the view of Farrā, Abu 'Ubayda, Tha'lab, and all linguists.

grew up and his contemporaries attained maturity.' They mean (to express) his attainment of adulthood and maturity." Rāghib said that, "the word 'ند' is used to refer to the one who shares an essential nature only. The word 'شبه' is used to refer to the one who has a similar state only. The word 'مساوي' is used to refer to something that is equal in sum only. The word 'شكل' is used to refer to what shares only in degree and area. The word 'مثل' encompasses all of that. Therefore, when God wanted to negate equality in every way, He made specific mention of it. He said, *There is not like His likeness* (مثله) *a thing*. As for joining between the 'ك' (like) and 'مثل' (likeness) – it has been said that – that is to add emphasis to the negation as a way of alerting that using the word 'مثل' (likeness) isn't proper, nor the 'ك' (like). So He negated both matters together by saying 'ليس' (there is not). And it has been said: 'the 'مثل' here means 'description' (صفة). And its meaning is: 'there is not like his description any description' (ليس كصفته صفة) as an alert to that—even though He is described by much of what mortals are described by—those attributes of His are not in accordance with how they are used with reference to mortals."

[20] And amongst what Rāzī said regarding the interpretation of the verse (Qur'ān 68:42) is that it means, "The Day that the shin of Hell or the shin of the Throne or the shin of a huge awesome angel will be laid bare," while the phrase only indicates the existence of a shin. As for whose shin that is, there is nothing in the phrase that indicates it." In *Mahāsin al-Ta'wīl* of the most erudite Jamāl Qāsimī, may God show him mercy, [it is written that] Abū Sa'īd al-Ḍarīr said: "It means: The day that the base of the affair will be laid bare," and the shin of a thing is its base by which its upright posture occurs like the shin of trees and the shin of man. That is, the true nature of things and their bases will appear on the Day of Resurrection. So the shin means 'the base of the affair and its true nature' as a metaphor for 'the shin of trees.'"

[21] Bayhaqī said in his book, *al-Asmā wa al-Ṣifāt*, while using these words of poetry as evidence, "[It has been related] about Ibn 'Abbās that he was asked about His saying, Exalted in Highness: *The day that a shin will be laid bare*. He said: 'When something from the Qur'ān is confusing to you, then look for it in poetry. For verily it is the *dīwān* of the Arabs.'"

[Imāms] Bukhārī and Muslim related in their two *Ṣaḥīḥs* that the Prophet ﷺ said that, "God, Mighty and Majestic, will uncover His shin."[22] This is a possessive form ascribed to Him. Its meaning is, "He will uncover His adversity and His actions that are attributed to Him." And the meaning of, "He will uncover it" is "He will remove it." 'Āsim ibn Kulayb said, "I saw Sa'īd ibn Jubayr get angry and say, 'They say, He will uncover His shin, while that is merely from an adverse matter.'"

Abū 'Umar,[23] the Scrupulous, mentioned that, "The shin means the self." He [also] said, "And [an example] of it is the statement of 'Alī [ibn Abū Ṭālib], may God be pleased with him, when the *Shurāt* (the *Kharijites*) said, 'There is no judging except for God, Exalted is He.' 'Alī said, 'It is a must to wage war against them even if my shin perishes.'" So, according to this the meaning of it would be, "He will become manifest to them."

And in the ḥadīth of Abū Mūsā about the Prophet ﷺ where he said, "He will remove for them the veil and, they will look at God, Mighty and Majestic. Then, they will fall to God, prostrate, but some people will remain. In their backs will be the like of the spurs of cows. They will want to prostrate, but they will not be able to. So, that is [the intent of] His saying, Exalted is He: *The day that a shin will be laid bare, and they are called to prostrate. However, they will not be able* (Qur'ān 68:42)."

Qāḍī [Abū Ya'lā] held the view that the shin is an attribute of the essence. He said, "Similar to it is, 'He will put His foot in Hell.'"

[22] In *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* it is recorded that [isnad omitted by translator] the Prophet ﷺ said, "Our Lord will uncover His shin. Then every believing man and woman will prostrate to Him [...]." Ḥāfiẓ ibn Ḥajar said, "It occurs in this version [with the words]: 'Our Lord will uncover His shin.' It is the version of Sa'īd ibn Abī Hilāl from Zayd ibn Aslam. Ismā'īlī reported it with the same wording and said: "There is a point of objection in his statement: "His shin." Then he reported it by way of Hafs ibn Maysura ibn Yazīd ibn Aslam with the wording, "A shin will be exposed." Ismā'īlī said, "This [narration] is sounder, because of its agreement with the wording of the Qur'ān on the whole!'" Ibn Shāqlā criticized Bukhārī for reporting the ḥadīth of the shin in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, because it is from the narration of Ibn Abī Hilāl, who he is of the opinion that he does not fulfill Bukhārī's conditions. Due to his weakness. Ibn Ḥazm also said, "Ibn Abī Hilāl is not strong. Yaḥyā and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal mentioned that he confuses and mixes up ḥadīths."

[23] Translator: Swartz, in his translation, refers to this personality as 'Abū 'Amr' instead of 'Abū 'Umar.' He writes, "The reading of the name is uncertain. [...] If Abu 'Amr is the correct reading, it is undoubtedly a question of Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Hamdān, the author of several works on the Qur'ān and Arabic grammar, who died in 378/988. However, in parallel passages [in other works] the name is given as Abū 'Umar al-Zāhid, whose full name is Muḥammad b. 'Abd Al-Waḥid b. Abi Hashim Abū 'Umar al-Baghwi al-Zāhid. He was the author of a work on the ḥadīth and died in 345/956." See, Merlin Swartz, op. cit., p. 151.

He narrated about Ibn Mas'ūd that he said, "He will uncover His right shin. Then, the Earth will shine from the light of His shin."

I would say to this statement that his mention of the shin along with the foot is clearly drawing a likeness between God and His Creation. As for what he mentioned about Ibn Mas'ūd, this is impossible [to have come from him]. In addition to that, an attribute cannot be established for God with the like of these fairy tales, just as His essence cannot be described as "a beaming light" by which the Earth will shine. [Abū Ya'lā's] argument about the annexation [of the shin to God being an indication that it is an attribute of His] is of no significance, because if He uncovers His adversity [experienced on the Day of Judgment] He has uncovered His shin. So, it appeared to these [scholars] that the meaning of, "He will uncover" is "He will show," but the meaning can only be, "He will make [it] vanish and disappear" [since He will remove the horrors and adversities experienced by the believers on the Day of Judgment].

But, Ibn Ḥāmid said, "It is compulsory to believe that God, Glorified and Exalted be He, has a shin, which is an attribute of His essence. So, whoever rejects that has disbelieved." In replying, I would say that if an uncultured layman uttered this it would be repugnant. Then how [should one feel] when this is uttered by someone who is supposed to be from the people of knowledge? For surely, those who interpret are more justified and excused than they are, because they refer the matter back to the language, while these [scholars] whom we are discussing affirmed a shin and a foot for the essence of God so that the ascription of a body and form became a reality.

[They have made an error in understanding His words], Exalted be He: *Then, He became established over the Throne* (Qur'ān 57:4).[24] Khalīl ibn

[24] Alūsi says in his exegesis, "People differ regarding the discussion of this verse and others like it. There are those who explain *al-'arsh* according to the popular meaning, 'Throne,' and explain *al-istiwā'* to mean 'establishment.' That has been related from Kalbi and Muqātil. Bayhaqī related it in *al-Asmā' wa al-Ṣifāt* with many different readings from a group of the *Salaf*, but he declared all of them to be weak. As for what is related about Mālik, may God be pleased with him, that when he was asked: "How did God mount the Throne?" Imām Mālik lowered his head and was silent until the sweat of fever covered his brow, then he looked up and said: "*Istiwā'* is not unknown, the modality of it is inconceivable in the mind; but belief in it is obligatory, and inquiring about it is a heretical innovation. You are an innovator." And he gave orders for him to be taken out. This [here] is not unequivocable in indicating this view due to the possibility that what is meant by his saying, 'not unknown,' is that 'it is of well-known confirmation' not that its meaning is 'establishment.' And that it is not unknown." He said in another place, "And Shaykh 'Izz al-Dīn ibn 'Abd al-Salām held the

Aḥmad said, "The '*Arsh* is the 'Throne,' and, every throne of a king is called an '*arsh*." This was a common word used amongst the Arabs during the period before Islām and which has continually been used during the Islāmic period. God, Exalted be He, said: *And he raised his parents on the throne* (Qur'ān 12:100) as well as: *Which of you will bring me her throne?* (Qur'ān 27:38).

You should know that linguistically, "establishment" (*istiwā'*) has a number of meanings, one of them being "evenness." One of Banū Tamīm said, "*Fastawā* the wrongdoer of the tribe and the wronged." That is "They were even." *Al-istiwā'* also means "The completion of something." God, Exalted in Highness, said: *And when it reached its full maturity and became complete* [*wa istawā'*] (Qur'ān 28:14). *Al-istiwā'* can also mean, "To form an intention to do something." God, Exalted be He, said: *Then, He turned to the Heaven* (Qur'ān 2:29). This statement means, "He formed an intention to create it." [Finally], *al-istiwā'* also means, "To gain mastery over something." [As] the poet said, "Whenever he attacks a people he declares their sacred precinct to be as public property/And by sunrise he has taken control of all they possess."

like of this view. He said in his *Fatāwā*: "The methodology of figurative interpretation goes with its condition. It is to bring the interpretation closer to the truth, since God, Exalted in Highness, merely addressed the Arabs according to what they already knew. And He erected the proofs indicating His intent from the verses of His book, since He said, Glory to Him: *Then verily its explanation is upon Us* (Qur'ān 75:19) and: [...] *so that you'd make clear to the people what has been revealed to them* (Qur'ān 16:44). This generally applies to all of the verses of the Qur'ān. So whoever becomes acquainted with the proof, God will grant him understanding of His intent from His book. And such a one is more perfect than he who has not become acquainted with that, since those who know and those who do not know are not equal." This is a position of moderation regarding the matter. Ibn Hamām took a stance of moderation in *al-Musāyara* (as one attaining the rank of *ijtihād* as his contemporary, Ibn 'Ābidīn al-Shāmī, says in *Radd al-Muḥtār*) more excellent than this moderate position. He mentioned the gist of what is, "The obligation of believing that God mounted the Throne while negating resemblance (between Him and His creation). As for the intent being 'He got mastery over [it],' it is possibly the intent, although it is not necessarily it, since there is no [decisive] proof for it. When it is feared that the laity will not understand what is meant by *al-istiwā'*—when it does not mean *istīlā* (getting mastery over)—other than connectedness and other things that necessitate being a body, then there is no harm in directing their understanding to [accept the meaning] *al-istīlā* (getting mastery over something). For surely the reference to it linguistically has been confirmed [as] in the poet's saying: 'So when we rose up and got mastery over them—we made them a feeding ground for vultures and birds,' and the poet's saying: 'Bishr has gained mastery over Iraq—without a sword and without bloodshed.'

Ismā'īl ibn Abū Khālid al-Tā'ī related, "The Throne is a red sapphire. All of the *Salaf* took the position of mentioning this verse as it has come without explanation (*tafsīr*) or interpretation (*ta'wīl*).

Some people of the latter days construed this description according to human understanding and perception. They said, "He became mounted on the Throne with His essence." But this is an addition they have [which is] not reported from the *Salaf*. Rather, they understood it through their human perception, because the one who mounts something does so with his essence. Ibn Ḥāmid said, "The mounting is physical contact and an attribute of His essence. Its meaning is, 'To sit.'"[25] He said, "And a group of our comrades held the view that God, Exalted be He, is over His Throne. He does not fill it [its space] and He will sit His prophet with Him on the Throne." He also said, "The descent is to change from one place to another."

According to what he has related, [it would follow that] God's essence would be smaller than the Throne. It is amazing then, when such a person, [after affirming this, then turns and says], "We are not of those who ascribe bodily characteristics to God!" It was said to Ibn Zāghūnī, "Has He acquired a new attribute that was not there after creating the Throne?" He said, "No. He merely created the world with the attribute of 'underness.' So, the world became below in relation to Him. When the attribute of below is established for one of the two objects, being worthy of the attribute of above is established for the other." He also said, "And it has been established that places do not exist in His essence, nor is His essence in them. So, His disconnectedness from them is established. There must [also]

[25] Jalāl al-Dawānī said in *Sharḥ al-'Aḍudiyya*, "And I have seen in some of the works of Ibn Taymiyya the adoption of that opinion regarding the Throne (the categorical uncreatness of it). Shaykh Muḥammad 'Abduh said in one of his comments on the text, "And that was because Ibn Taymiyya was one of the Ḥanbalīs who clung to the literal meanings of the verses and ḥadīths who said that God became established on the Throne while sitting. So it was mentioned to him that it necessitates that the Throne is without beginning, since God is without beginning. So His place is without beginning, and the uncreatedness of the Throne is contrary to his view (*madhhab*). So he said: 'Its type is uncreated,' meaning that God incessantly does away with one Throne and produces another from the infinite past to the infinite future so that His mounting continues without beginning or end." So let us ask: where would God be between the time of destroying [one Throne] and creating [another]? Does He cease to be established? If so, then let Him say that it is thus for infinity. So Glory to God! How ignorant is man and how repulsive is what he finds contentment with! I do not know if Ibn Taymiyya truly ever said any of that, since much has been reported about him that he did not say.

be a starting point by which the partition occurs. So, when He said, *istawā'*, we came to know His exclusive possession of that direction." He said, "And His essence must have an end and a limit that He knows."

I would comment that this is a man who does not know what he is saying, because if God [had] determined a limit and partition between creation and Himself, He has delineated and affirmed that He possesses a shape or bodily form. [Ibn Zāghūnī] also says in his book, "Surely, He is not an atom, because the atom is what occupies space." But [here] he establishes for Him a place that He occupies. This is indeed a foolish statement uttered by him and a clear likening of the Creator to the creation. So, this Shaykh did not know what is compulsory for the Creator, Exalted be He, and what is impossible in His regard. For verily, His existence, Exalted be He, is not like atoms and composite bodies that are in need of a location. Indeed the directions of under and over only apply to what can be faced and run parallel to something else. A necessity of the object being faced is for it to be bigger than, smaller or equal to the thing it is measured against. But this and the like only apply to composite bodies. Every thing that can be placed parallel to composite bodies can [also] touch them. Whatever is subject to [both] physical contact with composite bodies and to being apart from them is finite with an origin, since it has been established that the proof of the created and non-eternal nature of atoms is their susceptibility to physical contact and dislodgment. So if those in question considered this possible for Him, they have declared the possibility of His being non-eternal and created. And if they deny the possibility of that for Him, there no longer remains a way for us to establish the fact that atoms are indeed created.

If we then presume one who is independent of place and location and another that is in need of location, then we say, "Either they are neighboring or alongside one another or they are separate from one another." That would be impossible [with respect to the Creator] for verily, contiguity (the attribute of being so near as to be touching) and apartness are amongst the essential characteristics of occupying space with respect to all physical matter.[26]

It has also been established that joining and dispersing are amongst the essential characteristics of occupying space, and the One True God, Glorified and Exalted be He, is not to be described in terms of being in a space or time, since if He was subject to space, He would either be

[26] Translator: The rulings that apply to physical matter cannot be applied to God.

motionless in His location that bounded Him or moving away from it. It is also not proper to describe Him in terms of things such as motion, stagnation, joining, or dispersing. Whoever is alongside and touching or apart, has become defined by boundaries, and when ones existence becomes defined by a particular measure, one requires one who gives specification.[27] Conversely, it *should* be said that God is neither inside nor outside of the universe, because entering and exiting are among the inescapable properties of things that take up space. So these two states are cast as [others, such as] motion, stagnation and all the other coincidental accidents and properties that happen to all physical objects.[28] [None of them apply to God.]

With regard to the statement of those in question, "He created places, not in His essence. So, His being detached from places is clearly established," we would reply, "His Holy essence is not susceptible to having something created in it, nor for anything to take up residence in it." [In spite of this], their taking a human understanding and perception of the texts has caused them to liken God with His Creation while mixing various things and themes. [They continued in this manner] until one of them said, "God made mention that He mounted the Throne merely because it is the closest of all things in existence to Him." But this is also foolishness, because "closeness" in terms of distance can only be imagined to apply to a composite body. So it is very difficult for us to accept that someone saying such statements is held to be a member of our *madhhab*!

[27] Translator: Ibn al-Jawzī is explaining that when you begin to speak of where something is or is not in terms of limits, space, time and boundary, you have already given it limits. However, Ibn al-Jawzī is very careful to qualify his statement so as not to be misconstrued. There is a difference between someone giving limits of space, time and boundary to God as mentioned above and giving *definition*, which could also be considered as a "boundary" to God, that He has given Himself in the revelation, such as Lord, Creator and Sustainer. In these matters God has defined Himself and given the limit or boundary between Himself and His Creation in that He does not resemble it, He does not need to eat, drink and so on. This type of "limiting" or "boundary," for lack of a better word, is allowed and necessary, for God has *defined* Himself in this manner, which is not the type of definition and limit being addressed in the text by the author.

[28] Translator: Ibn al-Jawzī is warning us to use speech carefully. Thus it is more befitting for us to say that God is above space and time or that God was before space and time, as in the statement of Imām 'Alī, may God be pleased with him. For if we spoke in an unqualified manner of God in using words such as inside, outside and attributing them to Him, this can create doubts or suspicious matters in the mind of the believer. It then behooves us to attempt to use unambiguous speech whenever possible.

Some of them also made an argument that God is above the Throne by His saying, Exalted in Highness: *To Him the good word ascends. And the righteous deed—He elevates it* (Qur'ān 35:10) as well as His saying, Exalted be He: *And He is The Irresistible, over His servants* (Qur'ān 6:18). They declared that to be "a physical overness" and forgot that the physical overness applies either to a composite body or an atom, and that "being over" can [also] be applied to "Highness in status." It is said, "*So and so (fulān) is over so and so (fulān)*."[29] And, just as He, Exalted be He, said: [...] *over His servants,* He also said, Exalted in Highness: *He is with you.* (Qur'ān 57:4) So whoever [of these three men] understands this [passage] to mean "knowledge," his opponent may [rightfully] understand the establishment to mean *mastery and subdual.*[30]

One group held the view that God, Exalted be He, is on His Throne having filled its space. This position [according to them] more closely resembles Him touching the Throne while the Chair (*kursī*) is the place of His feet. I would answer this by saying, "Physical contact only occurs between two composite bodies." The one who would follow this position has not left anything [to the imagination] in likening God to a human body!

[29] In Rāzī's *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr* he says, "The world is a sphere. If this is so, it is then impossible for the god of the world to occur in the direction of 'up.' If we were to imagine two men, one of them on the point of the east and the other on the point of the west, the bottoms of their feet would be facing one another. Therefore, what is up with relation to one of them would be down with relation to the second. As for God, Exalted in Highness, to be below this ephemeral world is impossible by the agreement of [almost] everyone, so it is a must that He not be in a specific place."

[30] Fakhr al-Rāzī says in *Asās al-Taqdīs*, "Verily the apparent meaning of His saying, Exalted in Highness: *We are closer to him than the jugular vein* (Qur'ān 50: 16); *He is with you wherever you are* (Qur'ān 57:04) and; *He is He who is, in Heaven, a God and, in Earth, a God* (Qur'ān 43:84) negates His being established on the Throne. And there is no greater preference given to interpreting these verses over interpreting the verses whose literal meanings they adopted."

Translator: In other words, one cannot justifiably choose to interpret these verses and not interpret the others that point to God being in Heaven or over it, since there is no evidence stating that the above cited verses should be interpreted, while the verses the aforementioned Ḥanbalīs cling to should be accepted literally. Consequently, one must accept that either God is everywhere and in a particular place at one time, or that He is not restricted by place, since all of the verses would be taken as metaphors all indicating His transcendence.

If it is said, "It has been reported in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* from the ḥadīth of Shurayk ibn Abū Namir from Anas ibn Mālik, may God, Exalted in Highness be pleased with him, that he mentioned the Ascension (*al-Mi'rāj*), and said concerning it, "He [the Prophet] ascended with him to al-Jabbār, Exalted in Highness. Then he ﷺ said while he was in His place: 'O Lord! Make it easy on us.'" [The way to dismiss this as an evidence for their position is to quote what] Sulaymān al-Khaṭṭābi said, "As for this wording, Shurayk was alone in [reporting] it. Others did not mention it, and he is many times alone in reporting rejected versions. Place cannot be attributed to God, Exalted be He. Rather the statement of the ḥadīth is a reference to the place of the Prophet ﷺ and the first place that he was made to stand. In the ḥadīth is [the statement], "[...] Then I asked permission from my Lord while He was in His abode." It gives the illusion of a place. However, the meaning is, "[...] in His abode whose homes are for His friends."[31] And Qāḍī [Abū Ya'lā] said in his book, *al-Mu'tamad*, "Surely, God is not characterized by place."

[Another example of verses where they liken God to His Creation is how they literally construe His Words], Exalted be He: *Are you secure from He who is in Heaven* [...]? (Qur'ān 67:15–16)[32] It has been established unequivocally that the verse is not to be understood nor to be taken according to its literal meaning, because the word "in" is for containment, but the One True God, Glorified and Exalted be He, is not contained in

[31] Bayhaqī added in *Kitāb al-Asmā wa al-Ṣifāt*, "And it is Paradise."

[32] Fakhr al-Rāzī said about the explanation of this verse, "It is not possible for this verse to be left to flow according to its apparent meaning by the agreement of the Muslims, because His being in Heaven necessitates that Heaven encompass Him from all sides. Therefore, God would have to be smaller than Heaven, and Heaven is much smaller than the Throne. In this case it would mean that God, Exalted in Highness, is a small thing in relation to the Throne. And that by the agreement of the people of Islam is impossible." Zamakhsharī said—and Fakhr concurred with him—concerning the verse: *He who is in Heaven* "It has two interpretations. One of them is: 'He whose kingdom is in Heaven, because it is the habitat of the angels. And His Throne, His Seat, and the Preserved Tablet are there and from it, His judgments, books, commands, and prohibitions descend. The second [interpretation] is: 'that they used to have anthropomorphic beliefs, that He was in Heaven, and that mercy and punishment descend from Him. And they used to call on Him from its direction (Heaven).' So it was said to them in accordance with their belief: 'Are you secure from He whom you claim is in Heaven—while He transcends place—that He will not punish you by the Earth caving in or with a storm of pebbles?' This is similar to what you said to some of the Anthropomorphists: 'Do you not fear that He who is on the Throne will chastise you for what you do?' when you see him committing certain sins.

any place. When human understanding prevents one from adopting the like of this [literal] understanding, all that is left for one to do is describe the Magnificent One with what is magnificent.

Another [passage taken by people to suggest literal human-like qualities for God] is His Statement, Exalted be He: *O pity me over what I neglected in God's side* [...] (Qur'ān 39:56).[33] That is, "In His obedience and command," since negligence can only occur with respect to His essence. As for the commonly acknowledged "side" of the possessor of limbs, no negligence can occur in its regard. But, Ibn Ḥāmid said, "We believe that God, Glorified and Exalted be He, has a side on the basis of this verse." The lack of reason in this regard is unbelievable! If negligence is not possible with respect to [the physical side of] creation, how could it be possible regarding an attribute of the Creator, Splendid is His Majesty? Tha'lab sung: "O my friends! Stop and remember God in my side!" That is, "in my regard."

And, [an example] of them is His saying, Exalted in Highness: *So, We blew into him from Our spirit* (Qur'ān 21:91).[34] The exegetes said, "It means: 'from Our mercy.'" The spirit is only attributed to Him, because it was from His command.

Rāzi also said, "And the goal behind mentioning Heaven is to magnify God's authority and to extol His power as He said: *And He is God in the Heavens and on Earth* (Qur'ān 6: 3). For a surety an object cannot be in two different places at the same time." He also said, "Why is it not possible for the intent of His saying: *He who is in Heaven*, to be 'the angel given the assignment of carrying out the punishment' who is Gabriel, upon him be peace?"

[33] Zamakhsharī says in *al-Kashshāf*, "The [Arabic word *janb* translated as] 'side' is synonymous with [the Arabic word] *jānib*. It is said: 'I am at the side of *fulān* and *fulān* has a gentle side.' Eventually they said: 'He was negligent in his side.' They mean 'with respect to him.' Sābiq the Berber said: "Do you not fear God in a lover's side—who has a burning heart for you that is broken to pieces?" Sayyid Maḥmūd Alūsī said in his exegesis, *Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī*, "And in general it is not possible to allow that expression to remain understood according to its literal sense, because of His being exalted, Mighty and Majestic, above having the 'side' that carries the literal meaning. I have not found any of the *Salaf* considering it to be amongst the reported ascriptions. I would not rely upon what is found in *al-Mawāqif*. But, presuming that it is considered [one of His attributes], their discussion of it is well known and all of them unanimously agree upon exonerating God from imperfection. So Glory belongs to the One whom nothing is like Him. He is the All-Hearing, All-Seeing! And in the personal Qur'ān of Hafsa it reads: *In God's remembrance*. The most erudite Qāsimī said in his exegesis, "That is [it means], '[in what I neglected] at the side of His command and prohibition, since I did not follow the best of what was revealed.'"

[34] Shihāb al-Alūsī said: *And We blew into him from Our spirit* (Qur'ān 38:72) is a depiction of the pouring out of what actually has life over the matter that is susceptible to it (life).

[Another of the verses that could be misinterpreted is] *They harm God* Qur'ān 33:57).[35] That is, "They harm His Friends." This is the same as His Words, Exalted be He: *And, ask the village* (Qur'ān 12:82). That is, "Ask its inhabitants." And, he said, ﷺ "'Uḥud is a mountain. It loves us and we love it." And, the poet said: "I have been told that the Fire, justly, has been ignited/And, the assembly railed at one another upon your passing, O Kulayb!"

Another [passage commonly misunderstood is], *Do they but wait until God comes to them in the canopies of the clouds?* (Qur'ān 2:210)[36] That is, "With shadows." Also [misunderstood by many is the passage] *And, your Lord comes* (Qur'ān 89:22). But, Qāḍī [Abū Ya'lā] mentioned that Imām

So there is neither a blow nor anything blown. It means, "When I complete his preparation and have poured over him that apparent spirit by which it lives, which is [no more than] My command [...]."

[35] Alūsi said, concerning: *Verily those who harm God and His Messenger* (Qur'ān 33:57) that to "harm" [God and His Messenger] is a reference to "the unbelief and abominations perpetrated that God and His Messenger are not pleased with" (expressed in this place) as a metaphor, since those things are a cause (for harm), or something necessitating it. And if that's [achieved] by looking at Him, Exalted in Highness, with relation to other than Him, Glory to Him, then it is sufficient in [establishing] the relationship. It has also been said about harming Him, Exalted in Highness, that: "Of the statements of the Jews, Christians, and polytheists are: *God's hand is fettered*; *The Messiah is the son of God*; *The angels are the daughters of God*, and *The idols are His partners*. High is God above that in great Highness!"

[36] One thing that Jār Allāh Zamakhsharī said is, "It is possible for the thing brought to be a creation in which case it would mean 'God will bring them His punishment or His vengeance' since it is indicated in His saying: *For verily God is All-Mighty* (Qur'ān 2:220). So if you said: "Why will the punishment come to them in clouds?" I would say: "because the clouds are the most likely object [of the descent] of mercy. When the punishment descends from it, the matter is more horrid and horrific, since when evil comes from where it is not expected, it is more distressing. Likewise, when good comes from where it is not expected, it is more pleasing. So how about when evil comes from where good is expected?" For that reason, the thunderbolt is an example of the revolting chastisement because of its arrival from where abundant rain is expected. Hence, God's saying, Exalted in Highness: *And what they were not anticipating appeared to them from God* (Qur'ān 39:48) weighed heavy on those who ponder the Book of God." And, Fakhr al-Rāzi conveyed a large section—as is customary for him regarding the verses of the Divine attributes—to the point that he said, "Verily His saying: *God will come to them* (Qur'ān 2:210) and: *Your Lord comes* (Qur'ān 89:22) is a notification of the state of the Resurrection. He mentioned this occurrence precisely in *Sūrat al-Naḥl*, where He said: *Do they but wait until the angels come to them or for the command of your Lord to come?* (Qur'ān 16:33). So this clear text became a clarification for that ambiguous text, since when each of these verses came regarding a single incident, it is not a remote thing to construe some of them according to [the meaning of] others. And, He, Exalted in Highness, said after it *And the matter is settled*

Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal commented on this passage, saying that, "The meaning of it is: 'His power and command.'" Imām Aḥmad also said, "And God already clarified it in His saying, Exalted in Highness:[...] *the command of your Lord comes* (Qur'ān 2:210)." The same thing has been mentioned in the Torah; *And, your Lord comes.* Imām Aḥmad said, "It is merely His power."

Ibn Ḥāmid said, "This is an error. Rather, He descends with His essence by changing location." I would answer this by saying that this statement of his about God's essence, Exalted be He, is based on human understanding and perception when considering physical entities and the like. Imām Ibn 'Aqīl when commenting upon His saying, Exalted be He: *Say: the spirit is from the command of my Lord* (Qur'ān 17:85), said, "He who curbs His creation from asking about a created thing, then curbing them from [asking about] the Creator and His attributes is more fitting." And they used to sing: "The description of the soul, man cannot grasp it/So, how about the description of the All-Powerful in beginninglessness?"

(Qur'ān 2:210). There is no doubt that the definite article, 'the', (ال) is to indicate something familiar that has already been mentioned. So it must be that something was mentioned before that, and the definite article, 'the,' stands as an allusion to it. That thing is no more than what we have declared to be hidden in His saying: *God will come to them* (Qur'ān 2:210) meaning 'the command of God will come.'" Fakhr al-Rāzi ended the comment with his statement, "And what is clearer to me of all that has passed is that we mentioned that His saying, Exalted in Highness: *O you who believe! Enter into peace entirely* (Qur'ān 2:208) descended in reference to the Jews. And according to this estimation, His saying: *So if you slip after the clear evidences have come to you, then know that God is All-Mighty, All-Wise* (Qur'ān 2:209) would be an address directed to the Jews. Therefore, in this instance, His saying, Exalted in Highness: *Do they not but wait until God comes to them in canopies of clouds and the angels?* (Qur'ān 2:210) would be a narrative about the Jews, the meaning being 'they will not accept your religion unless God comes to them in canopies of clouds with the angels.' Do you not see that they did something similar with Moses? They said: *We will not believe you until we see God manifestly* (Qur'ān 2:55). Since this is a narrative about the state of the Jews, it would be allowed to let it run according to its apparent meaning, because they adopted the creed of anthropomorphism. They considered it possible for God to come and go, saying: 'Verily He, Exalted in Highness, became manifest to Moses, upon him be peace, on the mount in canopies of clouds.' They also asked the like of that during the time of Muḥammad ﷺ."

CHAPTER 2

MAKING MENTION OF THE ḤADĪTHS THAT THEY CLASSIFIED "REPORTS OF ATTRIBUTES"

YOU SHOULD KNOW that such ḥadīths contain subtleties and defects that none know except the juridical scholars. [These sometime] occur in their narration and other times in disclosing their meanings, and we will clarify that, God-willing.

The First Ḥadīth

Bukhārī and Muslim related in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* that Abū Hurayra, may God be pleased with him, said, "The Messenger of God ﷺ said: 'God, Exalted be He, created Adam, upon him be blessing and peace, on his form.'"[1]

Scholars have two different positions about this matter. The first is to "maintain silence about its explanation," and the second is to, "Discuss its meaning." The proponents of the second view differ over the pronoun "his"—regarding who it refers to—into three possible opinions:

[The first possibility is that] it refers to one of the children of Adam. That is because the Prophet ﷺ passed by a man hitting another man while saying to him, "May God disfigure your face and the face of whoever resembles your face." So, he said ﷺ "When one of you strikes, let him be wary of the face. For surely, God, Exalted in Highness, created Adam on his form."

He made special mention of Adam because he is the one whose facial features were started on this form and was afterwards copied. So, it is as if he was alerting us to the fact that, "You have reviled Adam even though you are one of his children." And that is an exaggerated way of rebuking him.

[1] Rāghib al-Aṣfahānī says, "As for the form, what he means by it is the 'shape' that perceives through sight and spiritual discernment that He gave exclusively to man. His superiority to many of His creatures is due to it. Its annexation to God, Glory to Him, is a figurative way of indicating possession, not to indicate the division into parts or equality. He is high above that! Rather that is a way of indicating that he has been granted nobility as in His saying: 'the house of God' and 'the she-camel of God.' And similar to that is [His saying]: *And I blew into him from My spirit* (Qur'ān 38:72)."

Based on this understanding, the "his" is an indirect expression pointing to the person being hit.[2] [It would be] a gross error [if it was used] to refer to God, Mighty and Majestic, because of the Prophet's ﷺ saying: "[...] and the face of whoever resembles your face." For certainly if he attributed it to God, Glory to Him, it would clearly be likening God to His Creation. In the ḥadīth of Abū Hurayra, may God, Exalted be He, be pleased with him, as narrated by Muslim, the Prophet ﷺ said that "When one of you fights let him avoid the face. For verily, God, Exalted be He, created Adam on his form."

The second opinion is that the [pronoun] "his" is an indirect expression referring to two clear nouns. So it does not fit to be directed to God, Mighty and Majestic, due to the establishment of proof that He, Exalted be He, is not a form. Thus the pronoun in the text refers to Adam. The meaning of this ḥadīth is that God, Exalted in Highness, created Adam completely on his form upon which He created him, and He did not transform him from a sperm to a clot as in the case of his progeny.[3] This is the view of Abū Sulaymān al-Khaṭṭābī. And, Tha'lab mentioned it in his *Amāli*.

The third opinion is that it refers to God, Exalted be He, but there are two different views regarding this meaning. The first of them is that it is the form of an angel, since it is God's doing and creation. So its ascription to Him is viewed in two ways, the first of them is [that it means]. "To bestow honor through the use of a possessive pronoun," as in His saying, Exalted in Highness: *And, purify My house for the those who go around* [*it*] (Qur'ān 2:125). The second position stated is that, "He invented it, meaning the form of Adam, not according to any model that came before." The second view is that "form" means "characteristic." You say [in Arabic], "This is the form of this matter," meaning "its characteristic."

[2] One of the things that Rāzi mentioned about the explanation of this report is, "Verily the aim of it is to invalidate the view of those who say that Adam was in another [physical] form like it is said that he had a huge body and a tall frame in such a manner that his head was close to Heaven. So the Prophet ﷺ pointed to a specific man—and he was the one being hit—and then said: "Verily God created Adam on his form." That is, Adam's physical shape was like the shape of this man with absolutely no dissimilarity."

[3] Amongst the interpretations that Fakhr presented in this place is his saying, "When He, Exalted be He, magnified the regard for Adam by making him the object of the angels' prostration and after he committed that error, God, Exalted be He, did not punish him in the same manner that He punished others. For it has been related that God, Exalted be He, cast him out of Paradise just as He cast out the serpent and the peacock while changing their physical form. But He did not change Adam's physical form. Rather, he left him in the original form to dignify him and as a way to preserve him from the chastisement of transformation."

[It follows therefore, that] the creation of Adam would be according to His characteristic, vis-à-vis life, knowledge, power, hearing, seeing, and will, and by that, He distinguished Adam from all other animals. He then distinguished him from the angels with the attribute of elevation when He made them prostrate to him. But the form in this case is non-perceptible, not the form characterized by lines.

Abū Muḥammad ibn Qutayba[4] held a repugnant view about this ḥadīth. He said, "God, Exalted be He, has a form, not like [other] forms. Then He created Adam on it." This makes no sense and is nonsense, because the meaning of his statement is that Adam's form is like the form of the One True God, Exalted be He. But, Qāḍī [Abū Ya'lā] said, "Applying the statement, 'the form, not like forms,' is used to refer to the One True God, Exalted be He, just as we applied the name, 'His essence.'" This [equally] makes no sense, because the "essence" means "a thing," but "form" is a shape, [having] lines, and a composition. It requires a fashioner and composer. And the [last part of the] statement of the one who says, "A form not like other forms," is an invalidation of the first part of the proposition. He has become similar to [the one] who says, "He is a body, not like other bodies." For certainly the "body" is a physical thing and something composite. So when someone says, "A body unlike other bodies," he invalidates what he previously said.

The Second Ḥadīth

'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn 'Ayyāsh related that the Prophet ﷺ said, "I saw my Lord in the most beautiful form. He said to me: 'What is the Highest Assembly disputing about, O Muḥammad?' I said: 'You are more knowing, O Lord.' So, He placed His palm between my shoulder blades, and I felt its coldness between my breasts. Then, I knew all that is in the Heavens and Earth.'"

Imām Aḥmad said, "The source of this ḥadīth and its chains of narration are conflicting. It was related from the ḥadīth of Abū Hurayra, who reported that the Messenger of God ﷺ said, "A visitor came to me in the

[4] Abū Muḥammad 'Abd Allāh ibn Muslim ibn Qutayba is the author of many works, one of the Imāms of literature, a transmitter of historical reports but who reports very little. He would sometimes relate anthropomorphic statements from the writings of the People of the Book. He is accused of *al-Naṣb* (championing Mu'āwiya and reviling 'Alī). Ḥākim considered him to be a liar and others declared him to be trustworthy. He died in the year 276.

most beautiful form, and said: 'What is the Highest Assembly disputing about?' I said: 'I don't know.' So he placed his palm between my shoulder blades, and I felt its coldness between my breasts. Then I knew everything that He asked me about." It is also related from the ḥadīth of Thawbān who related that, "The Messenger of God ﷺ came out to us after the dawn prayer and said, 'Verily, my Lord came to me last night in the most beautiful form. Then He said to me, 'O Muḥammad! What is the Highest Assembly disputing about?' I said: 'I don't know, Lord.' Then He placed His palm between my shoulder blades until I felt the coldness of His fingertips. Then, all between Heaven and Earth became manifest to me.'"

These ḥadīths are divergent. The best of their chains of narration indicate that this happened during sleep, but the vision seen in a dream is only a presumption. Presumptions are not realities,[5] just as a man may see himself flying or as if he has transformed into a beast, and different people have seen the One True God, Glory to Him, in their dreams in the way that we have mentioned. If we said that the Messenger of God ﷺ saw God while being awake, then the "form"—if we accept that [interpretation]—refers to God, Exalted in Highness. So the meaning would be, "I saw God in the best of His characteristics [like His] turning toward me and [His] display of satisfaction with me." And if we said that it refers to the Messenger of God ﷺ the meaning would be, "I saw God while I was in the most beautiful form."[6] But, Ibn Ḥāmid related from the ḥadīth of Ibn 'Abbās, God be pleased with them, from the Prophet ﷺ that he said, "When I was taken on the Night Journey I saw the All-Merciful One,

[5] Ḥāfiẓ ibn Ḥajar says on this topic, "And there is no consideration given to he who followed up his comments with his saying: 'In the sound ḥadīth it says that "the dream of Prophets is [Divine] inspiration."' So it does not require an interpretation, because it is the statement of one who has not given close scrutiny in this place. In *Kitāb al-Ta'bīr* it has passed that some dreams of Prophets are subject to interpretation."

[6] It remains a duty of the author to comment on the end of the ḥadīth. We will convey from Fakhr al-Rāzī's *Asās al-Taqdīs* what remains to complete the objective. [He says] As for his statement "He placed His hand between my shoulder blades," it has two [possibly valid] interpretations: The first is that the intent is to over emphasize the interest shown to his condition and the care for his state. The second [possible interpretation] is that the meaning of the 'hand' is [the bestowal of] 'favor.' As for his statement, "So I felt its coolness," there is a possibility that it means "the coolness of the favor," "its refreshing feeling," and "its comfort." It is an example of their saying: "a cool livelihood," when it is opulent. And what indicates that the meaning of it is [to imply] "complete acquaintance [with things]" is his saying, God bless and grant him peace, at the end of the ḥadīth: "Then I knew all between the East and the West."

exalted in Highness, in the form of a beardless young man with [illegible] curlers. And it appeared to [...][7] describing Him to you. So, I asked my Lord to honor me with seeing Him. Then, all of sudden it was as if He was a bride when His Veil was removed from Him, mounted on His Throne."

This ḥadīth is a shameful lie. It has not been reported in a sound or in a spurious collection. So may God, Exalted be He, be far from its doing! And we [Arabs] used to say [when the Qur'ān was being revealed] that that Night Journey] was [merely] a dream. So would he ﷺ then mention this one night of the *Isrā*'?! May God, Mighty and Majestic, repay them and reward them with Hell! They equate God, Glorified and Exalted be He, to a bride?! No Muslim has written this! And as for the mention of "coldness" in the preceding ḥadīth, coldness is a coincidental accident. It is not possible to be attributed to God, Mighty and Majestic. Qāḍī [Abū Ya'lā] mentioned in his book, *al-Kināya*, "I saw my Lord in the most beautiful form." That is, in the most beautiful place.

The Third Ḥadīth

Umm Tufayl, the wife of 'Ubayy, related that she heard the Messenger of God ﷺ mention that, "He saw his Lord, Mighty and Majestic, in a dream in the most beautiful form as a glowing young man in green. On his feet were sandals of gold, and over his face was a blanket of gold."

This ḥadīth, is related by Na'īm ibn Ḥamād. Ibn 'Adī said, "He used to fabricate ḥadīths." Imām Aḥmad was asked [about him], and he turned his face away from him (the asker). He said, "His ḥadīth is rejected and unknown." It is on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās from the Prophet ﷺ that he said, "I saw my Lord as a curly-haired beardless boy wearing a green vestment." This is related by way of Ḥamād ibn Salama, and Ibn Abū al-'Awjā, the crypto-infidel, [who] was the stepson of Ḥamād. He used to interpolate these ḥadīths in his [stepfather's] books that have neither been confirmed nor are they good for being used to make an argument.

Qāḍī [Abū Ya'lā] actually affirmed these [ascriptions of curly hair, being beardless, and having a green vestment] as attributes for God, Exalted be He. He said, "They have been established as names, but we don't comprehend their meanings." Who [on Earth] establishes [attributes] through dreams

[7] It is likewise in the original kept in our possession. Translator: In the Swartz translation of *Akhbār al-Ṣifāt*, the missing phrase is: "Indeed, I was instructed not to describe Him to you." See Merlin Swartz, op. cit., p. 180.

while the transmissions of them are not soundly established? We know the meaning of the *shābb* (young man) and the *amrad* (beardless young boy), but he says, "It is not as we understand." This is like someone saying, "Fulān stood up, but he is not standing," or, "He sat down, but he isn't sitting."

Imām Ibn 'Aqīl said, "We are certain this ḥadīth is a lie. The reliability of the narrators avails naught when the text is impossible to affirm." This is similar to the example if a group of trustworthy narrators informed us that the camel of the cloth merchant has entered the eye of the tailor's needle. The trustworthy status of the narrators has no affect while their report is actually impossible to affirm.

The Fourth Ḥadīth

Anas related that, "The Messenger of God ﷺ said, 'The night that I was taken on a journey (*al-Isrā'*) I saw everything from my Lord until I saw a crown immersed in pearls.'"

Abū Qāsim Muḥammad ibn al-Yasa' relates it from Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm. Azhari said, "I used to sit with Ibn al-Yasa' for an hour, and then he would say: 'I have recited the entire Qur'ān since you sat down. And Qāsim [ibn Ibrāhīm] is insignificant." Imām al-Dāraquṭni said, "He [Abū Qāsim Muḥammad ibn Al-Yasa'] is a liar. May God, Exalted be He, recompense him for this deed."

The Fifth Ḥadīth

Bukhārī and Muslim related in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* from Abū Hurayra, who narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said, "God will gather humanity, and then say, 'Whoever used to worship something, let him follow it.' Then, they will follow what they used to worship, and this *Umma* (nation) with its hypocrites will remain. Then God, Exalted be He, will come to them in other than the form by which they know Him and He will say, 'I am your Lord.' They will say, 'We take refuge with God, Exalted be He, from you. We will remain in our places until our Lord comes to us. And when our Lord has come, we will recognize Him.' Then He will come to them in the form that they know, and He will say, 'I am your Lord.' Then they will say, 'You are our Lord.'"

And in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* it is related from Abū Sa'īd that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Then the Omnipotent One will come to them in a form other than His form upon which they saw Him the first time and then He will say,

'I am your Lord.' They will say, 'You are our Lord.' Then only the prophets, upon them be blessing and peace, will address Him. It will then be said, 'Is there between you and Him a sign that you know?' They will say, 'The shin.' Then He will expose His shin, and every believer will fall prostrate to Him."[8]

You should know that it is compulsory for every Muslim to believe with respect to God, Glorified and Exalted be He, that it is impossible that the "form" which happens to be a shape and a composition applies to God. Abū Sulaymān al-Khaṭṭābi said, "The meaning of 'then God, Exalted in Highness, will come to them' is that 'He will remove the veil for them until they see Him with their eyes, just as they used to identify Him in the world through empirical indications.' So seeing Him after they had not seen Him is analogous with the arrival of the visitor who has not been seen before."

Some scholars have said, "He will come to them with the horrors of the Resurrection and the forms of the angels."[9] But, they were not familiar with the like of such [a scene] in the world, so they will seek refuge from that condition and they will say, "When our Lord comes we will recognize Him." That is, "When He comes to us we will know Him from His kindness." And it is the "form" that they recognize. Then He will uncover a shin, meaning an adversity. It is as if He will remove those horrible adversities. So they will fall prostrate out of gratitude.

One of them said, "It is a form by which He will test them, just as He will dispatch the Anti-Christ (*Dajjāl*). Then, they will say, 'We take refuge with God, Exalted in Highness, from you.'" Also, in the ḥadīth related by Abū Mūsā, in which the Prophet ﷺ said, "The people will say: 'Verily, we have a Lord that we used to worship in the [mundane] world.' Then, it will be said, 'And would you know Him if you saw Him.' They will say, 'Yes.' Then it will be said, 'How could you know him and you have not seen Him?' They will say, 'Surely, there is none that resemble Him.' Then He will remove the veil, and they will gaze at God, Mighty and Majestic. Then they will fall prostrate.'" Imām Ibn 'Aqīl said, "The 'form' literally

[8] The discussion of this ḥadīth has already passed during the explanation of His saying, Exalted in Highness: *The Day that a shin will be laid bare* (Qur'ān 68:42).

[9] [This should be read] while considering 'in' [which appears in the verse] to mean 'with.' Similar to it is the statement of Ibn 'Abbās who said about His saying, Exalted be He: *Do they but wait until God comes to them in canopies of clouds* [...] (Qur'ān 16:33) that, "This means *with* canopies of clouds" according to what Fakhr al-Rāzi reported in his book, *Asās al-Taqdīs*.

applies to lines and shapes. But those are some of the characteristics of physical entities. And what diverted us from [determining] Him to be a physical entity or body is His saying, Exalted be He: *There is nothing like unto Him* (Qur'ān 42:11). Even a rational proof that could be utilized [to support the aforementioned conclusion] is that if God is a composite body, His [supposed] Form would be a contingent property [indicative of createdness]. And if God is a bearer of accidents, what is possible for physical bodies would be possible in His regard. [It would then follow that] God would need a maker, and if He were a composite body without beginning, it would also be possible for us to be without beginning [since we would be equal to Him, and there is no differnce between one possible equal and another].

So the evidence compels us to assign a meaning to "form" whose possessive form applying to God would be befitting Him and proper. And that is to demand that it means the "state" upon which [Arabic] linguists used sometimes synonymously with "form." They say, "What is your form ("state") like with *fulān*?" as well as, "*fulān* is on a form ("state") of poverty."

So, the state that they disavowed knowledge of is [the state of] inconsistency, while the one that they acknowledged was [the state of] kindness. Therefore, He will *remove* adversity, since change is something that only befits His action. As for His essence, it is exonerated from change.[10] We take refuge with God from having the ḥadīth taken according to the understanding of those that ascribe bodily characteristics to God, and [their understanding] that the "form" (*ṣūra*) refers to His being. That is to deem it possible for change to befall His attributes. In spite of that, they referred to Him as being a "form." If that is meant literally, then it is an impossibility, and, if it is something [they] will imagine, then it is undoubtedly not as they would believe. He will show them something other than Himself.

The Sixth Ḥadīth

Muslim related in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* that al-Mughīra reported that the Messenger of God ﷺ said, "There is no person more jealous than God. For that

[10] Translator: Change does befit God's action, but it does not befit His essence, since according to the orthodox school of the Ash'arīs, God's actions are created, while His essence is not. His action is something that occurs outside of His essence, and were we to say that it is not created, it would mean that the creation is eternal without beginning, since His creation is an act of His.

reason, He forbade vile deeds. And, there is no person who loves praise more than God."

Some narrators mention the word "person" (*shakhs*) and some mention, "There is nothing more jealous than God." The transmitters narrate according to what they believe the meaning to be. [The mention of the word] person results from the corruption of the transmitters. The meaning could be, "There is not from you—O people—anyone more jealous than God." That is because once everyone was mentioned altogether He was denoted by their particular names. The person can only be a composite body. Another statement with similar form is that of Ibn Mas'ūd, "There has not been created from Heaven or Hell anything greater than the "Verse of the Chair" (*Āyāt al-Kursī*).

Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal said, "The created refers to Heaven and Hell, not to the Qur'ān." It is also possible for this to be a result of the grammatical rule which determines that an entity mentioned in a group of things may be excluded when it is unrelated to the members of that category, like in His saying, Exalted be He: *They have no knowledge of it except the pursuit of conjecture* (Qur'ān 4:157).[11] As for "jealousy," the scholars have said, "Anyone who has displayed jealousy towards a thing has attributed his dislike to it." So, when God forbade vile deeds and threatened [to punish] for [committing] them, the Messenger of God ﷺ characterized Him as having jealousy.

The Seventh Ḥadīth

Abū Mūsā related that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Verily, God, Exalted be He, created Adam from a handful that He grabbed from the entire Earth."[12]

The handful was attributed [to God] because the actions of the thing possessed can be attributed to the owner. That is because Adam was produced

[11] Translator: Meaning that *conjecture* does not fall in the category of *knowledge*, even though the impression is given that it does. Its exclusion from the whole should not be understood that it falls under knowledge. Another example of this is God's saying: *So the angels fell prostrate, all of them, altogether, except for the Devil* (Qur'ān 38:73-74). The impression one gets is that the Devil is one of the angels, but the truth is that he is not. It is common in Arabic usage to express an item to belong to a group of things and then for it to be actually excluded from it while indicating that it does not belong with the category of the other entities. For example, the Arabs used to say, "All the men stood up except for a donkey."

[12] Suyūṭī says in *al-Jāmi' al-Kabīr*, "Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī, Aḥmad, and Ḥākim reported it as well as Bayhaqī in *al-Sunan*, Ṭabarānī in *al-Kabīr*, and Ibn Sa'd."

from a heap of sand as in His saying, Exalted be He: *So, we obliterated their* (Qur'ān 54:37). Muḥammad ibn Sa'd related in *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt* ("The Compendium of Scholars") that God, Exalted be He, created the Devil and then took [mud] from the surface of the Earth, and created Adam from it. For that reason, the Devil said: *Shall I prostrate to him who You created from* (Qur'ān 17:61).

The Eighth Ḥadīth

Salmān related that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Verily, when God leavened Adam's clay [from which he was created] and struck him with His hands every good [soul] came out in His right hand and every foul [soul] came out in His other hand. Then, He shuffled them. Thereafter, He brings the living out of the dead and the dead out of the living."

This is incompletely transmitted (*mursal*). It has been also established with proof that the One True God, Glorified and Exalted be He, is not described as touching anything. If it were sound, it would be taken merely as a similitude to refer to that by which destinies run. Qāḍī [Abū Ya'lā] said, "The leavening of the clay and mixing some of it with others is annexed to the hand by which God created Adam." [But it should be known that] this is a clear equation between the Creator and His creation.

The Ninth Ḥadīth

'Ubayd ibn Ḥunayn related, "While I was sitting in the mosque, Qatāda ibn al-Nu'mān suddenly came in, sat down, and began to speak. He said, 'Go with us to visit Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī, for I have been informed that he has fallen ill.' So we went until we entered upon Abū Sa'īd and found him lying down while resting his right foot on the left. We greeted him and sat. Qatāda then raised his hand to the foot of Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī and pinched it extremely hard. [In doing so] Abū Sa'īd said: 'Glory to God, O son of Adam who has caused me pain!' Qatāda said: 'I meant [to do] that since the Messenger of God ﷺ said, 'Verily, God, Exalted be He, when He completed His creation, He lied down, and then put one of His feet on the other.' He then said: 'It is not proper for one of His creation to do this.' Abū Sa'īd said, 'I will surely not do this ever again.'"[13]

[13] Ḥāfiẓ Bayhaqī related this report in *al-Asmā wa al-Ṣifāt* and said, "This is a rejected ḥadīth. I have only recorded it from this chain of narration. Falīh ibn Sulaymān—one of the narrators—despite fulfilling the condition of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, we find that the

'Abd Allāh ibn Ḥanbal said, "I have not seen this ḥadīth in the relied upon source books of the sacred law." Concerning 'Ubayd ibn Ḥunayn, Bukhārī said of him, "His ḥadīths on the authority of the People of Medina are not sound." In the ḥadīth is another weakness [namely] that Qatāda ibn al-Nu'mān died during the caliphate of 'Umar, God, Exalted is Highness, be pleased with him, and 'Ubayd ibn Ḥunayn died in the year 5 at the age of seventy-five according to the statement of Wāqidi. So his narration from Qatāda ibn al-Nu'mān would have a broken chain. Imām Aḥmad said, "If its chain of narration was sound it would be possible that the Messenger of God ﷺ related it from some of the People of the Book in a manner of condemning them [since it portrays the Creator as a human being who lies down and crosses his legs], but Qatāda did not understand that he was condemning [them]."

Similar to this is the ḥadīth in which we are told that al-Zubayr heard a man relating a ḥadīth about the Messenger of God ﷺ. He listened until the man finished and asked, "You heard this from the Messenger of God ﷺ?" The man said, "Yes." He said, "This and the likes of it are of what we have been prohibited from relating about the Prophet ﷺ. By my life, I [too] have heard this from the Messenger of God ﷺ on that day. However, the Messenger of God ﷺ started with this ḥadīth, and he related it to us concerning a man from the People of the Book. He related it and then you came after the conclusion of the first part of the ḥadīth. He also mentioned the man from the People of the Book, but you thought that it was a ḥadīth on the authority of the Messenger of God ﷺ."

I would then say that this statement is most likely the allusion in the ḥadīth of al-Zubayr to the ḥadīth of Qatāda. Indeed the People of the Book said, "Verily, God, Exalted be He, when He created the Heavens and the Earth, rested." So His Words were revealed, Exalted be He: *And no fatigue touched us* (Qur'ān 50:38). It is possible that the Messenger of God ﷺ narrated that about them, and Qatāda did not hear the first part of the speech.

'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Aḥmad related in *Kitāb al-Sunna*, saying, "I saw al-Ḥasan placing his right foot on top of his left while sitting.

did not report this ḥadīth of his in their *Ṣaḥīḥs*. He is in the view of ḥadīth scholars, one who is not used to support an argument. [Concerning him] it has been reported that Yaḥyā ibn Ma'īn said, "His ḥadīths are not used as proof," as well as saying, "Falīh is weak." It has also been reported that Nasā'ī said, "Falīh is not strong." The Shaykh [al-Bayhaqī] said, "So since Falīh ibn Sulaymān al-Madanī is one that ḥadīth scholars differ about the permissibility of using him as proof, the like of this grave matter cannot be established by his narration." He also mentioned as a weakness the fact that 'Ubayd did not meet with Qatāda.

So I said: 'O Abū Sa'īd! This sitting posture is disapproved of.' He said 'May God distance from His mercy the Jews [who said: God rested on the seventh day]!' Then he read: *And We have created the Heavens, the Earth, and all between them in six days, and no fatigue touched us* (Qur'ān 50:38). Then I knew what he meant by it. So I desisted."

I say that al-Ḥasan was alluding to what we mentioned about the Jews. It has been soundly established about the Messenger of God ﷺ, Abū Bakr and 'Umar, may God be pleased with them, that [the Jews] used to recline while placing one foot on another foot, while that is only disliked for the one who is not wearing trousers. And God knows best.

The Tenth Ḥadīth

Qāḍī [Abū Ya'lā] related about Ḥasān ibn 'Aṭiyya that a man from [among] the polytheists reviled the Messenger of God ﷺ so a man from the Muslims assaulted and then killed him. Thereafter, the [Muslim] man was killed in retribution. So the Messenger of God ﷺ said, "Why are you astonished at he who supported God, Exalted be He, and His Messenger? He met God, Exalted be He, while reclining and then He sat up for him."

This is a ḥadīth of one of the disciple's of the Prophet's companions (*tābi'īn*) far from being sound. If it had any strength its meaning would be "Then God, Exalted in Highness, turned to him and blessed him."

The Eleventh Ḥadīth

Bukhārī and Muslim related in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* that Anas related that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Hell will continue to [have souls] cast into it and it will say, 'Are there more?' until the Lord of Might puts His foot in it. Then part of it will become folded to the rest of it."[14]

In considering this ḥadīth, it is our duty to believe that God's essence, Mighty and Majestic, does not divide into parts, place cannot contain Him and it cannot be characterized by change and going from one place to

[14] Jār Allāh Zamakhsharī says in his book, *al-Fā'iq fī Gharīb al-Ḥadīth*, "Putting the foot on something is a similitude indicative of inhibition and suppression. So it is as if he said 'The command of God will come to it.' Then it (the foot) will prevent it (Hell) from seeking the addition, so it will be inhibited." He also says in *Asās al-Balāgha*, "An example of figurative speech is: 'Then He will put His foot over it.' That is, He will give it calm and break its vehemence, just as when a man places his foot on something that is palpitating to give it calm and stillness."

another. Abū 'Ubayd al-Harawī related that Ḥasan al-Basrī said, "*Al-qadam* (literally the foot) is a reference to those from the worst of God's creatures who have been earmarked and designated for Hell." Abū Manṣūr al-Azharī said, "*Al-Qadam* are those who have been preordained to reside everlastingly in the Fire. And things that have been placed out in front are refered to in Arabic as *qadam*, while things that have been demolished are called *hadam*." And his ﷺ saying, "As for the Garden, He will erect for it a creation" supports this.

A second interpretation is that all of those who will arrive at Hell is called a *qadam*. In this case, *qadam* is the plural of *qādim*. As for those who narrate the ḥadīth with the word "foot/leg," the Arab say [about locusts], "a foot or leg of locusts." So the intent would be "a party will enter Hell resembling, in their abundance, locusts. Then they will fall quickly into it." Qāḍī [Abū Ya'lā] said, "The foot is an essential attribute of the [Divine] essence." Ibn Zāghūnī said, "It can be said that, He put his foot in the Fire only to inform them that their idols burn. It was as if He was saying, "Your idols burn and I do not burn." But this is an acknowledgment of division in God's essence into parts. It is amongst the most deplorable of beliefs.

And I found that Abū Bakr ibn Khuzayma composed a book about the attributes,[15] and divided it into chapters. Some of his chapters read: "The Chapter of the Affirmation of the Hand," "The Chapter of Holding the Heavens on His fingers," and "The Chapter of the Affirmation of the Foot in spite of the Mu'tazilites." Then he said, "God, Exalted be He, said: *Do they have feet by which they walk? Or do they have hands by which they strike?* (Qur'ān 7:195). So He has told us that whoever does not have a hand or foot is like the cattle."

Imām Ibn 'Aqīl said, "God is indeed exalted from having an attribute that occupies places! And the One True God, Exalted be He, is not in need of possessing sections or parts such that He deals with things by them. [Then if we take this literally], are we to believe that His command and creation are carried out in the Fire such that He seeks help through something of His essence and deals with it (the Fire) with one of His attributes, although He is the one who said [to the Fire kindled for Abraham]: *Be coolness and peace* (Qur'ān 21:69)?[16]

[15] It is the book that he called *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* (The Book of Monotheism). Imām Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī says about it, "It is in reality *Kitāb al-Shirk* (The Book of Polythiesm)."

[16] Translator: This clearly shows that all He has to say to bring something into existence is "Be!" and it is.

How feeble-minded this belief is! Be it far removed from the Creator of all in the terrestrial and celestial realms! He has expressly declared them to be liars. He said: *If these were gods they would not have drawn near to it* (Qur'ān 21:99), so how can it be believed that the Creator will draw near to it (i.e., Hell)? God is Exalted above the foolishness of those who liken Him to a human body!

The Twelfth Ḥadīth

Abū Hurayra related that the Prophet ﷺ said, "the Non-believer's molar in the Fire will be like Mount 'Uḥud. And the density of his skin will be forty-two cubits by the cubit of the Omnipotent One."[17]

Abū 'Umar, the Scrupulous, said, "*Al-Jabbār* (the Omnipotent One) here means 'The Tall One.' The Arabs called a date-palm tree that is tall *jabbāra*."[18] Qāḍī [Abū Ya'lā] said, "We understand it according to its outward form, while *al-Jabbār* is God, Mighty and Majestic."

This is unbelievable! Have they lost their minds?! Is it permissible to say that the cubit (*dhirā'*) is forty-two times [in length] until it reaches the [size of the] non-believer's skin and believe that there is some connection to the Beginningless essence of The Divine? God is Exalted high above [this egregious blasphemy]!

The Thirteenth Ḥadīth

Qāḍī [Abū Ya'lā] relates about Mujāhid that he said, "When the Day of Resurrection comes, David, upon him be blessing and peace, will mention his oversight and God, Exalted be He, will say, "Come to Me!" Then he

[17] Shaykh Ismā'īl 'Ajlūnī says in his book, *Kashf al-Khafā wa Muzīl al-Ilbās 'ammā ishtahara min al-aḥādīth 'alā Alsinat al-Nās* ("Removing Obscurity and Confusion from the Ḥadīths that have Become Commonplace to Hear from the Tongues of People"), "Muslim related it from Abū Hurayra going back to the Prophet ﷺ. Aḥmad, Ṭabarānī, and Bayhaqī [related it] from Ibn 'Umar going back to the Prophet ﷺ and Tirmidhī from Abū Hurayra [with similar wordings]."

[18] Ibn Qutayba says in his book, *Ta'wīl Mukhtalif al-Ḥadīth*, during his discussion of the ḥadīth, "We say that this ḥadīth has a sound interpretation if the Prophet ﷺ intended it. It is that 'al-Jabbār' in this instance is a reference to the king. God, Exalted be He, says: *And you are not over them a tyrant* [*king*] (Qur'ān 50:45). That is, 'an overlord,' and the '*jabābira*' (plural of *jabbār*) are 'the kings.' This is akin to people saying: 'he is such and such cubits by the king's cubit [measure].' They mean 'by the largest cubit.' And I believe that he was one of the non-Arab kings who had a perfect-sized forearm. So it was attributed to him."

will say, "O Lord! But my oversight! My offense!" Then He will say, "Get behind Me!" Then he will say, "O Lord! But my offense!" Then He will say, "Take hold of My foot!"" And in one wording on the authority of Ibn Sīrīn he said, "Verily God, Exalted be He, will bring David close until he places his hand on His Thigh.".

It is unbelievable that one would attribute such a thing to the One True God, Glorified and Exalted is He, with the statements of one of the disciple's of the Prophet's companions, while it has not been soundly established that it is transmitted by them! If it were sound, they would be relating it from the People of the Book as Wahb ibn Munabbih mentions. But, Qāḍī [Abū Ya'lā] said, "We hold it on its literal meaning, because we are not affirming a foot or thigh that would be a limb." This is simply amazing! They have completed the structure of the body by affirming a thigh, a shin, a face, two hands, fingers, a little finger, a thumb, ascent, and descent. [Then] they say, "They are construed according to their apparent meanings," but qualify by stating, "While they are not limbs."

Would any sane person really affirm for God, Exalted be He, a back, a front and a thigh? We should not even make the effort to sit and speak with such people as these, since we know what the thigh is. But they immediately jump and say, "It isn't a thigh. And the backside isn't a backside." No one should seek to have any form of intelligent conversation with these people, for they will only insult your intelligence and speak to you as children.

The Fourteenth Ḥadīth

Bukhārī and Muslim related in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* that Abū Hurayra reported the Prophet ﷺ as saying, "God laughs at two men, one of them kills the other, both of them will enter Paradise." In the *Afrād* of Imām Muslim it is reported that Ibn Mas'ūd said that the Messenger of God ﷺ was told about the last person who will enter Paradise and he laughed. He was then asked, "Why are you laughing?" He replied, "Because of the laughter of the Lord of the worlds."

You should keep in mind that the word *ḍaḥk* (literally laughing) has a number of meanings that all originate from "clarification" and "manifestation." Anyone who reveals a matter that was hidden, it is said of him [in Arabic]: "he laughed." It is said, [for example] "The Earth laughed with vegetation when it appears in it and brings forth its flowers." This is [also] the same thing when it is said, "The sky cried." The poet said: "Every day the Earth laughs with a new daisy/From the crying of the sky."

Laughter that seizes people is merely a reference to when some manifests the teeth that are concealed by the mouth. But this is impo with respect to God, Glorified and Exalted is He. It is [therefore] nece to construe it to mean, "God manifested His generosity and graciousn

And the meaning of, "I laughed because of the laughter of my Lord. "I [laughed by revealing my teeth and opening my mouth] because of Lord's manifestation of His Generosity and Graciousness." It has [also] b related in a ḥadīth designated to a companion that, "He laughed until i uvulas and molars showed." Khallāl mentioned it in *Kitāb al-Sunna*.

Al-Marwazi said, "I said to Abū 'Abd Allāh: 'What do you say about t ḥadīth?' He said, 'It should be given some consideration.' Then he sa 'Assuming its soundness, two interpretations are possible. The first of the is that "he" refers to the Prophet ﷺ. It is as if he laughed when he was t about the Lord's laughter, Splendid is His Majesty, until his uvulas an molars showed. And this is the correct interpretation if the ḥadīth's soun ness is confirmed. The second [interpretation] is that it is a metaphor ind cating the greatness of generosity and the broad scope of satisfaction ju as He drew a metaphor in His saying, "And whoever comes to me walk ing [a normal pace] I'll come to him walking [quickly]."[19] But, Qāḍī [Ab Ya'lā] said, "Adopting the [understanding of the] outward meaning of th ḥadīths is not prohibited while allowing them to pass on their outward forms without reassigning their literal meanings."

How amazing! He has affirmed attributes for God, Exalted be He, wit reports with slender documentary base and expressions not confirmed t be sound, just as he affirmed [for Him] the [existence of] molars. He ha no good to take from Islām![20]

[19] Translator: The complete wording in the first narration of this ḥadīth is mentioned i Imām Muslim's collection. It reads that God—High is He—says: "I am with My slave thought of Me. And I am with him when He mentions Me. If He mentions Me to his self I mention him to Myself. If he mentions me in an assembly, I mention Him in an assembly better than them. If he draws near to Me a handspan, I draw near to him a cubit. If h draws near to Me a cubit, I draw near to him the length of both arms spread out. And i he comes to Me walking at a normal pace, I come to him walking quickly." See *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, ḥadīth no. 2675, *Kitāb al-Dhikr wa al-Du'a*.

[20] Translator: What has been translated as 'He has no good to take from Islam' is the expression فما عنده من الإسلام خير. In the 1998 publication of *Daf' al-Shubah* from *al-Maktaba al-Azhariyya li al-Turāth*, it reads:

فما عنده من الاسلام من خبر which could be translated as meaning "So he has no news/report from Islam." I felt that this was a possible misrepresentation of the original text, so I replaced '*khabar*' (news/report) with '*khayr*' (good). And God knows best.

The Fifteenth Ḥadīth

Qāḍī [Abū Ya'lā] related a ḥadīth designated to 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Umar in which he said, "God, Exalted be He, created the angels from the light of the forearms and the chest."

By it, Qāḍī [Abū Ya'lā] affirmed for God, Mighty and Majestic, forearms and a chest, this is despicable, because this report is a ḥadīth that is not elevated [to the Prophet] nor is it of a sound transmission. Does it make the slightest bit of sense that the created thing is made from the essence of the Beginningless One? This is more deplorable than what Christians claimed!

The Sixteenth Ḥadīth

Bukhārī and Muslim related in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* that Ibn 'Umar reported that the Prophet ﷺ said, "The believer will be brought close to his Lord. Then He will place His wing (*kanaf*) over him, and then say: 'Do you recognize this sin?'"

The scholars said, "He will bring him close to His mercy and kindness." Ibn Anbāri said, "His wing is His protection and screen. It is said: 'So and so screened so and so' when he protects him and screens him. And everything that screens another has guarded it. The shield is called a *kanīf* because it screens its owner."

But, Qāḍī [Abū Ya'lā] said, "He will bring him close to His essence." These words come from someone who does not know God, Glorified and Exalted be He. He does not even know that coming close in terms of distance is something that is not possible in His regard. Compare this with the transmitted statement, "Verily, He draws near on the day of 'Arafa," meaning that He will approach by way of His Kindness and Forgiveness.[21]

The Seventeenth Ḥadīth

Muslim related in his *Afrād* that Mu'āwiya ibn al-Ḥakam said, "I had a slave-girl who used to graze some small livestock for me. One day she left

[21] Translator: Ibn Mājah reports a ḥadīth on the authority of 'Ā'isha, may God be pleased with her, that the Messenger of God ﷺ said: "There is no day that God frees more slaves from the Fire than the Day of 'Arafa. Verily He draws near, and then boasts of them to the angels saying: 'What do these (people) want?'" See *Kitāb al-Manāsik*, chapter 56 "Supplication at 'Arafa," ḥadīth no. 3014.

[them alone] and suddenly a wolf made away with a sheep. So I gave her a severe slapping. I then went to the Messenger of God ﷺ and he emphasized the seriousness [of what I had done] to me. So I said, 'Should I free her?' He said, 'Bring her to me.' He then asked her, 'Where is God, Exalted be He?' She said, 'In Heaven.' The Messenger of God ﷺ then asked, 'Who am I?' She said, 'The Messenger of God.' The Messenger of God ﷺ said, 'Free her, for indeed she is a believer.'"

It has been established by the scholars that God, Exalted be He, can neither be contained by Heaven nor Earth nor do the [different] regions of land embrace Him. Thus, the only thing recognized by her gesture is the Creator's greatness to her—Splendid is His Majesty.

The Eighteenth Ḥadīth

Abū Razīn relates this ḥadīth. He said, "I said, 'O Messenger of God! Where was our Lord before creating His creation?' He said, 'He was in [dark] clouds. All below it was air and all above it was air. Then He created His Throne over the water.'"[22]

'Amā means clouds, but know that the directions of above and below refer to the clouds, not to God, Exalted be He. And [the preposition] "in" has the meaning of "above." So, the meaning would be, "He was over the clouds in terms of management and subjection."[23]

Since people were familiar with created things they would ask about them, and the clouds are part of the composite whole of His creation. Had they asked about what was before the clouds the Messenger of God ﷺ would have answered that God, Exalted be He, existed while there was nothing else with Him as has been related from the Messenger of God ﷺ "God—Sanctified and Exalted is He—existed while there was nothing else with Him."

[22] Imām Aḥmad related it in his *Musnad*, Ibn Jarīr in *Tahdhīb al-Āthār*, Ṭabarānī in *al-Kabīr*, and Abū Shaykh in *al-'Aẓama* (Cf., *Jami'al-Jawāmi'*).

[23] Translator: Furthermore this ḥadīth is weak. Both Tirmidhī and Aḥmad reported it on the authority of Abū Razīn al-'Uqaylī, and Wakī' ibn Ḥudus was the only one to relate it on the authority of his paternal uncle, Abū Razīn Abū Muṣ'ab al-'Uqaylī al-Ṭā'ifī. Ibn Qutayba said about Wakī', "He is unknown." Ibn Qaṭṭān said, "He is of unknown status." Ibn Ḥibbān mentioned him amongst the reliable narrators, and Ibn Ḥajar said about him, "He is acceptable." What is known from the methodology of Ibn Ḥajar is that when he grades a particular narrator as being "acceptable," it means that he has narrated a few ḥadīths, and that he is not valid as a proof unless his narration is supported by a separate narrator who is at the minimum, just as strong as he is. However, Wakī's report has not been strengthened by either a strong or weak narrator, and so the classification of the ḥadīth is obvious.

And we do not say that any of God's creation is over Him by any means, and He does not take up residence in objects with His essence, nor does He withdraw from them, because if He had taken up residence in them, He would be a part of them. [Likewise] if He withdrew from them, He would be at a distance from them.

The Nineteenth Ḥadīth

Bukhārī and Muslim related in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* that Abū Hurayra narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Our Lord descends every night to the sky of the world when the last third of the night remains. He says, 'Who calls on Me, so that I can answer him?'"

Twenty Companions related the ḥadīth of the descent, and the statement that motion, translocation, and change are impossible with respect to Him, Mighty and Majestic, has already been touched upon. So there remain two types of people with respect to this narrative.

There is the one who interprets it to mean that "He brings His mercy close," just as He has expressed [other] things as descending as well. He said, Exalted be He: *And We sent down Iron. In it is great strength* (Qur'ān 57:25), even though its mineral is from the Earth. He also said: *And He sent down for you of cattle eight pairs* (Qur'ān 39:6). The one who does not know the descent of the camel, how can he speak about the camel?

The second position is to refrain from speaking about it while adopting the belief that God is free of imperfection. The duty of all people is to believe in God's perfect state and to deny the possibility of Him changing from one location to another, [just as they are to believe] that the "descent" (*nuzūl*) in the ḥadīth, which is to transfer from place to place, requires three composite bodies: a body above that is a place for its occupant, a body below, and a body that transfers from Highness to lowness. But, this is not possible with respect to God, Mighty and Majestic.

But, Ibn Ḥāmid said, "He is on the Throne in His essence, making physical contact with it, and He descends from His place that He occupies and He changes from one place to another." This is a man who does not know what is possible with respect to God, Exalted be He.

Qāḍī [Abū Ya'lā] said, "The descent is an attribute of the essence. And we do not say that it is the descent that means 'changing from one place to another.'" This one is a deceptive sophist! And one of them said, "He moves when He descends." He does not know that motion is not possible with respect to God, Exalted be He. They also related that Imām Aḥmad made a

similar declaration even though it is a lie on him.[24] So if the descent were an essential attribute for His essence, it would be an attribute that is renewed every night.[25] But His attributes are beginningless like His essence.

The Twentieth Ḥadīth

Bukhārī and Muslim related in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* that Abū Hurayra narrated that a man came to the Prophet ﷺ and said, "Verily I am exhausted." So

[24] Abū Ya'lā related that in his *Ṭabaqāt* from Aḥmad by way of Abū al-'Abbās al-Iṣṭakhrī and it is as the author said: "a concocted report." It is strange that Ibn Taymiyya recorded it in his *Ma'qūl*—without objecting—what Ḥarb ibn Ismā'īl al-Karmānī, the disciple of Muḥammad ibn Karrām, relates in his *Masā'il* about Aḥmad and others in reference to Him, Glory to Him! [It reads]: "[...] He talks and moves [...]" He also conveyed from Dārimī's *al-Naqd*—while remaining silent or concurring— [that he said]: "The Living, The Self-Subsisting does what He pleases, He moves when He pleases, He descends and ascends when He pleases, He grabs and extends, and He stands and sits when He pleases, because the sign distinguishing between the living and the dead is movement. Every living thing undoubtedly moves, and every lifeless thing undoubtedly does not move." [It was also related that Ibn Taymiyya while discussing the ḥadīth of the descent was asked how God descends] so, he descended two steps down from the pulpit, and then said: "Like this descent of mine." As a result, he was accused of being an anthropomorphist.

[25] One of the things that Ibn Ḥazm mentions about the ḥadīth of the descent is, "This is merely an action that God does, Exalted in Highness, in the sky of the ephemeral world, which means 'to open up to accept supplication.' That hour is one of the most likely times of acceptance, response, and forgiveness for the diligent, those seeking forgiveness, and those [who are] repenting. This is well-known in the language [of the Arabs]. They say: '*fulān* descended from his right for me,' meaning that 'he gave it and he conferred it to me.' One of the proofs of it being an attribute of action, not an attribute of the essence, is that the Messenger of God ﷺ attached the aforementioned descent to a particular time. So it holds true that it is an action brought into existence at that time, done at that instance. We already know that whatever is without beginning, cannot be attached to a particular time by any means. The Messenger of God ﷺ made clear in some versions of the aforementioned ḥadīth what that action is. It is that he mentioned ﷺ that God commands an angel who is summoned at that time to do that. Furthermore, the third of the night differs from one land to another according to the different times of sunrise and sunset, and whoever has conducted a study knows that immediately. So it holds true immediately that it is an action done by the Lord, Exalted in Highness, at that time for the people of each horizon. As for he who determined that to be translocation, we have already set forth the invalidation of his statement in *Ibṭāl al-Qawl bi al-Jism*."

Translator: On the basis of these comments by Ibn Ḥazm, may God show him mercy, the fact that a particular third part of the night is always a reality in a particular part of the globe necessitates that God is always in the sky of the ephemeral world. This would mean that He is never on His Throne since He is in a constant state of descent.

ﷺ said, "Who will host him tonight?" So a man from the Ansār stood up and said, "I will, O Messenger of God!" Then he went with him to his wife, and then said, "Do you have anything?" She said, "No. Only the food of my children." He said, "Then distract them somehow when the children want dinner, and then put them to sleep, so [that] when our guest comes in, put out the lamp and make him think that we are eating." So they sat down and the guest ate. Then when the morning came he went to the Prophet ﷺ and said, "God, Exalted be He, was amazed with how you behaved with your guest last night."

It is related in Bukhārī's *Afrād* that Abū Hurayra narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said, "God is amazed by people who are dragged in chains until they enter Paradise."

The scholars state, "Amazement results only from something that comes unexpectedly to a person of which he does not know, and then he regards it as something great. It does not befit the Creator, Splendid is His Majesty." Rather, its meaning is that the value of that thing is great to God, since the one who is amazed by something its value is great to him. What is meant by the "chains" is that they were forced into compliance, [a manner] by which they will enter Paradise. Ibn Anbāri said, "The meaning of, 'Your Lord was amazed' is that He increased them in blessing and good treatment. So he expressed that in this ḥadīth through [the word] 'amazement.'"

The Twenty-First Ḥadīth

Bukhārī and Muslim related in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* that Abū Hurayra narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said, "God has greater joy from the repentance of one of you than one of you experiences from his lost animal when he finds it."

I would say of this that when He is delighted with something, and satisfied, it is said that, "He rejoiced." The intent is merely to express satisfaction with the repentance of the one in question, and it is not permissible to believe about God, Glorified and Exalted be He, the sensation that is experienced by created beings. For surely, the attributes of the One True God, Exalted be He, are beginningless. None of His attributes are created.

The Twenty-Second Ḥadīth

Muslim related in his *Afrād* that Abū Mūsā, narrated, "The Messenger of God ﷺ stood amongst us and made five brief pronouncements. He said, 'Verily God, Exalted be He, does not sleep and it is not proper that He

sleeps. He lessens justice and increases it. His veil is light. If He removed it, the Majestic Splendor of His Face would incinerate all that His sight reaches of His creation.'"[26]

As for his statement, "His Veil is light," it should be known that this veil of His belongs to the creation, because it is not possible for Him to be veiled, since the veil would be larger than what it covers. And just as it is not possible for there to be a beginning and an end to His existence, it is not correct for there to be a limit for His essence. The intent is merely that created beings are veiled from Him as He said, Exalted in Highness: *Nay! Verily they will be veiled from their Lord on that day* (Qur'ān 85:15). As for the Majestic splendor, it is the plural of *subḥa*. It is said that the *subḥa* is the splendor of His Face. An example of this is His saying, *Glory to God*. It is merely a glorification of Him and an expression of His perfect state. But, Qāḍī [Abū Ya'lā] said, "There is no harm in applying the expression, 'a veil beyond God, not for ascribing a boundary to Him and not that it runs parallel to His being.'" This is the statement of a confused person by which he seeks to placate the common people.

The Twenty-Third Ḥadīth

Ibn 'Abbās related that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Verily the People of Paradise will see their Lord, Exalted be He, every Friday in the sands of Kāfūr. Those sitting closest to Him will be those who came to Him the fastest on the Day of Resurrection."

His statement, "In the sands of Kāfūr," is an allusion to those who will be present there in the sands of Kāfūr, and "the closest of them to Him" means the most fortunate of them "In His sight." In another ḥadīth, it states, "The Just on the Day of Resurrection will be on pulpits of light on the right-hand side of the All-Merciful One." Some of them said, "The right-hand side of the Throne." In the ḥadīth about the market place of Paradise, it says, "And there will not remain a single person in that sitting place that God will speak to without a mediator." It has been related [in another version] as, "He will grab him by the waist" with a *khā* (خ) provided with a diacritical point.

[26] Nawwawī says in *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, "And the estimation is that: 'If He removed the thing hindering Him from being seen—it is the veil (*Ḥijāb*) referred to as 'light' or 'fire'—and He became manifest to His creation, the splendor of His being would incinerate all of His creatures."

This [ḥadīth], is related by Yūsuf ibn 'Abd Allāh, and is an error. "Grabbing by the waist," means, "To shake hands." But, Qāḍī [Abū Ya'lā] said, "It is not impossible for the One True God, Exalted be He, to be in the sands of Kāfūr." Here, he has acknowledged a limit for the essence of God. Then he said, "Not meaning that He goes from place to place." This [preposterous] thing is a game to him! Then he said, "And it is not impossible for them to draw near to the Divine essence." But with this [interpretation] the ḥadīth is spoiled. He also sought proof through the Prophet's statement, "Every single one of you, will be alone with His Lord, Exalted be He. The Qāḍī [Abū Ya'lā] said, "Seclusion is a way of expressing nearness, and nearness to the Divine essence is possible." And the refutation of this has already passed.

The Twenty-Fourth Ḥadīth

Bukhārī and Muslim related in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* that Ibn Mas'ūd said that, "A Jewish scholar came to the Prophet ﷺ and then said, 'O Muḥammad! Surely God will hold the Heavens on the Day of Resurrection on a finger, the Earth on a finger, the mountains and the trees on a finger [...].'" In another narration the wording is "[...] and the water and the soil on a finger. Then He will shake them." So the Messenger of God ﷺ smiled and then he said: "*And they have not considered God according to His true worth* (Qur'ān 39:67)."

I would answer this by stating that the apparent reason for the Prophet's smile, ﷺ is [to show his] disapproval [of the Jew's statement].[27] The Jews liken God to His Creation, and the revelation of the verse is proof of the Messenger's condemnation of such beliefs. Similar in meaning to this ḥadīth is his saying, "Verily the hearts of the children of Adam are between two of the fingers of the All-Merciful One. He turns them about however He pleases." Since the heart between two fingers is tractable and subdued, this indicates that the one who turns them about subjugates hearts. But, Qāḍī [Abū Ya'lā] said, "It is not wrong to hold and understand the report according to its outward meaning in affirming fingers as attributes that refer back to the Divine essence, since we do not affirm fingers that are limbs and parts."

[27] Ibn Khuzayma (he is the one who fell into the error of anthropomorphism) considers it unlikely that the Prophet's laugh ﷺ was out of disapproval. But Ḥāfiẓ ibn Ḥajar has invalidated this claim of his in *al-Fatḥ*.

This is the statement of a confused person, because he is either to affirm limbs or he is to interpret it. As for understanding and holding them on their outward meanings, their outward meanings are limbs. Then he says, "But they are not parts." So this is the statement of one who stands while sitting down. So the comments of whoever states this are spoiled.

The Twenty-Fifth Ḥadīth

Bukhārī and Muslim relate in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* that Ibn 'Umar narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said, "God, Mighty and Majestic, will fold the Heavens on the Day of Resurrection. Then He will seize them in His right hand. Then He will say, 'I am the King! Where are the mighty ones? Where are the proud ones?'"[28] This is how Muslim related it, and it is the most complete of all versions.

It has been established with decisive proof that the hand of the One True God, Glorified and Exalted be He, is not a limb, and that His clasp of things is not carried out through direct contact, nor does He have need of a palm. The Messenger of God ﷺ merely brought [its meaning] close to the faculties of comprehension in a way that human beings could understand it. As for the version mentioning "The left hand," it is totally weak. It has been soundly established about the Messenger of God ﷺ that he said, "And both of His hands are a blessed right hand."[29] So this weakens the mention of the left hand.

The Twenty-Sixth Ḥadīth

Imām Aḥmad, may God have mercy on him, related in his *Musnad* that Anas reported that the Prophet ﷺ said regarding His saying, Exalted be He: *So when his Lord became manifest to the mountain* (Qur'ān 7:143) that,

[28] In the copies of *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* that we have, there is the addition, "Then He will fold the Earths with His left hand."

[29] Al-Qutaybī says during the discussion of this ḥadīth, "He merely meant by that [to express] the meaning of 'completion' and 'perfection' since the left sides of all things are lesser than their right sides in strength, force, and perfection. The Arabs used to love to do things with their right hands, and they despised [what they did with] their left hands due to the perfection found in the right hand and the imperfection found in the left hand. It is possible that it means 'giving with both hands together,' since the right hand is the one that gives. So if both hands are right hands, giving happens with both of them. Mirār adopted this view when he said: 'And [ruling] over Iwāna is one who is profoundly wise—A young man, both of his hands are a right hand.'"

"It means that He pulled out the tip of the little finger." And in one wording [he said], "Then He gestured with His little finger and the mountain sunk into the ground." Ibn Ḥāmid recited, "So when his Lord became manifest to the mountain, the first joint of His little finger came out of it."

This ḥadīth is one that the scholars of ḥadīth have commented on. They said, "No one has related it from a reliable transmitter other than Ḥamād ibn Salama, and Ibn Abū al-'Awjā', the crypto-infidel, who introduced some deplorable things to Ḥamād which he related towards the end of his life. For that reason, some authors of sound ḥadīth collections shunned reporting on his authority." Even still, explaining this ḥadīth is easy, and that is because the Prophet ﷺ used to bring [its meaning] close to the faculties of [people's] comprehension by mentioning perceptible things. So he placed his hand on his little finger alluding to the fact that God, Exalted in Highness, revealed something simple of His Signs.

The Twenty-Seventh Ḥadīth

Qāḍī [Abū Ya'lā] related from 'Ikrima, that 'Ikrima said, "Whenever God, Mighty and Majestic, wants to frighten His servants, He reveals some of His self to the Earth, and then it quakes. And whenever God wants to crush a people, He becomes manifest to them."

Qāḍī [Abū Ya'lā] said, "He reveals some of Himself" is held according to its outward form. It refers to the Divine essence in a manner that does not lead to the ascription of parts."

I would say that whoever says, "He revealed some of His essence while it is not a combination of parts." should not be entertained with conversation. Rather the intent of the narration would be that He manifested some of His signs.

The Twenty-Eighth Ḥadīth

Abū al-Akhmas al-Jumḥī related that the Messenger of God ﷺ asked him, "Is it true that you take your razor and cut the ears of some of the camels [becaue of superstition], and then say, 'This is a sacrifice?' And do you split the ear of the other, and then say, '[This is] a severance for protection?' He said, 'Yes.' The Messenger of God ﷺ said, 'Then do not do it! For verily God's razor, Exalted be He, is sharper than your razor, and God's upper arm, Exalted in Highness, is firmer than your upper arm.'"

Qāḍī [Abū Ya'lā] said, "There is no objection to holding the report according to its outward meaning in its confirmation of the 'upper arm' as an attribute of His essence."

[Well, if that is so] I would then state [in response] that the intended meaning by the mention of the "upper arm" is [merely] "strength," since a man's strength rests in his upper arm. [Based on the Qāḍī's logic] he should have also affirmed [that God has] a razor too.

The Twenty-Ninth Ḥadīth

Abū Hurayra related that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Verily whenever the servant stands up to prayer, he is between the two eyes of the All-Merciful One."

We have already mentioned the attribute of "the eye" in the aforementioned verses before the discussion of the ḥadīths. What is intended by this ḥadīth is that, "God, Exalted be He, sees the praying person. So let [those] who are praying to Him show correct manners while in His Presence." Likewise is his saying, "[...] For verily God is in the direction of his face," meaning that He sees him [the person praying].

The Thirtieth Ḥadīth

Bukhārī and Muslim related in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* that 'Ā'isha, may God be pleased with her, reported that the Prophet ﷺ appeared while she was hosting a woman. He said, "Who is this?" She said: "*Fulāna*.[30] She is asking me about her prayer." He said: "Burden yourself with what you have the capacity to do! For by God, Exalted be He, does not get bored until you get bored." In another report, the wording is, "God, Exalted be He, does not grow weary until you grow weary."

The scholars state, "The meaning of the ḥadīth is God, Exalted be He, does not get bored even if you get bored as the poet said: 'Hudhayl burned Mina with rags/Mischief does not get bored until they get bored.'"

The true meaning is it (mischief) does not get bored even if they get bored [of doing a certain thing]. Otherwise, Hudhayl would have no superiority over them (the people of Mina). And some people said,

[30] Translator: The words *fulān* and *fulāna* are used in Arabic and translate in English as 'So and so.'

"Whoever gets bored of something [they] abandon it." So the meaning is He does not abandon giving reward as long as they do not abandon doing good works.

As for "boredom," it means, "The dislike of something; to consider it annoying; for the soul to have an aversion towards it, and to grow weary of it," which is impossible in His regard, Exalted be He. If this was possible it would mean to affirm for Him change and for created things to take up residence in His being.

The Thirty-First Ḥadīth

Khawla bint Ḥakīm related that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Verily the last step the All-Merciful One took was in Wajj."

Wajj is actually a ravine in Tā'if, and it is the last blow by which God, Exalted be He, struck the polytheists [in war] at the hand of the Messenger of God ﷺ. And like it is his saying, ﷺ "O God! Increase your step against Mudar!" And it (the step) is taken with the foot. Ibn Qutayba and others held this view. But, Qāḍī [Abū Ya'lā] said, "It is not wrong according to our principles to hold this report on its outward meaning, and that it is a characteristic of the essence, not of action, since we held his saying, "He descends" and "He puts His foot in the Fire," to refer to the Divine essence."

This man alludes by "their principles" to what necessitates the ascription of a body, translocation, and motion. And this man, while likening God to His Creation, is far from understanding the language, the knowledge of historical events and the proofs of logic. He was misled by a ḥadīth that was related about Ka'b, that he said, "Wajj is sacred. From it the Lord ascended to Heaven. Then He completed the creation of the Earth."

If this was soundly established from Ka'b it is possible that he is narrating on the authority of the People of the Book, from whom he used to narrate much. If we presumed it to be one of his statements, its meaning would be that, "That place was the last part of the Earth that became leveled. Then the Lord ascended," He undertook the creation of Heaven. And it is as His saying, Exalted be He: *Then He turned toward Heaven while it was smoke* (Qur'ān 41:11).

It has been related by Abū Hurayra that the Prophet ﷺ said, "When I was taken by night, Gabriel, upon him be blessing and peace, passed by me until he came to the Rock. Then he said: 'O Muḥammad! From here your Lord ascended to Heaven.'"

Bakr ibn Ziyād relates this. He used to fabricate ḥadīths against reliable transmitters. So if it is said, Ibn 'Abbās, may God be pleased with him, said that, *He turned to Heaven* means He ascended, we would say, "His command ascended," since moving from one place to another and change are not possible in His regard.

And know that people have three positions regarding "The Information on Attributes":

The first position is to let them pass as they came without explanation or interpretation unless it is necessary as in the case of His saying, Exalted be He: *And your Lord comes* (Qur'ān 89:22) which means, "when His command comes." This is the understanding of the *Salaf.* The second method is figurative interpretation, which is a dangerous position,[31] and the third way is speaking about them according to human understanding and

[31] He says in *Sharḥ al-Mishkāt*, "Nawwawī said in *Sharḥ Muslim*: 'With respect to this ḥadīth (ḥadīth *al-nuzūl*) and the like of it of the ḥadīths containing the Divine attributes and their verses, there are two well-known approaches: The approach of most of the *Salaf* and some of the speculative theologians is to believe in their true nature according to what befits Him, Exalted be He, and that their literal meanings that are commonly acknowledged with reference to us are not intended. We are to not discuss their meanings but all the while believing in God's being exalted, Glory to Him, from having all of the other characteristics of creation. The second is the approach of most of the speculative theologians and a portion of the *Salaf.* It is related about Mālik and Awzā'ī that they said they are to be interpreted in a way befitting them according to their non-literal meanings. Accordingly, the report is to be interpreted with two [different forms of] interpretations." By his comment and the comments of Shaykh al-Rabbāni Abū Isḥāq Shayrāzi, Imām al-Ḥaramayn, Ghazālī, and other than them of our Imāms, it is known that the two approaches (that of the *Salaf* and the *Khalaf* ["Those that followed." A name used for Muslims that came after the *Salaf*]) are in agreement about directing these apparent meanings, like the coming, the form, the person, the foot, the hand, the face, the anger, the mercy, the establishment on the Throne, being in Heaven, and other things away from their literal meanings, due to the impossibilities they necessitate that are clearly invalid, which necessitate things that induce one to apostasy by consensus. Thus, the *Salaf* and the *Khalaf* were compelled to divert the words from their literal meaning. They merely differed about, 'Should we divert it from its literal sense while believing that God, Exalted be He, is characterized with what befits His Majesty and Greatness without interpreting it with anything else [or should we mention something else]? The *latter* is the approach of most of the *Khalaf*, and it is a detailed interpretation. By that they did not intend to oppose the righteous forebearers. God forbid that that be thought about them! It was merely the urgency during their times that called them to that because of the great number of those who give God bodily qualities, those who deny His [true] attributes and other deviant sects and their achievement of mastery

perception. This method is pervasive amongst the ignorant transmitters, since they share no portion in the rational sciences by which it is known what is possible and impossible when discussing what is permissible to be attributed to God, Exalted be He. Indeed the rational sciences hinder the literal meanings of the transmitted reports from the error of likening God to His Creation. Since these ignorant transmitters do not know this science,

over the minds of the masses. By that, they sought to inhibit them and to invalidate their view. For that reason many of them apologised and said: "If we were similar to the right-guiding forebearers in purity of beliefs and the absence of those who champion falsehood during their time, we would not have indulged in the interpretation of any of that." We know that Mālik and Awzā'ī—while being amongst the most distinguished figures of the *Salaf*—interpreted in a detailed fashion. Sufyān al-Thawrī interpreted the 'establishment on the Throne' as meaning 'He pursued its affair' and *Then He turned to Heaven* (Qur'ān 2:29) to mean 'He turned His attention to it." With them is Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq. Furthermore, a group of them and the *Khalaf* said that, "The one who believes in direction is an unbeliever" as al-'Irāqī unequivocally expressed. He said that it is the view of Abū Ḥanīfa, Mālik, Shāfi'ī, Ash'arī, and Bāqillānī. The other Muslim factions agreed upon interpreting the like of: *And He is with you wherever you are, There is not a secret counsel of three except that He is the fourth, So wherever you turn there is God's face, And We are closer to him than his jugular vein* (Qur'ān 57:4, 58:7, 2:115, and 50:16), "The heart of the believer is between two of the fingers of the All-Merciful One," and "The black stone is God's right hand in the Earth." This agreement clarifies to you the correctness of what the master legal critics of scripture chose in that the appropriate stop (in reciting and understanding the verse of Āli 'Imrān 3:6) should be made on *And those deeply-rooted in knowledge*, (Qur'ān 3:6) not on the name of majesty." I would say that the majority holds the view that the appropriate stop is on *except God*, and they consider the stop on it to be a compulsory one. It is the apparent indication, since the meaning of *ta'wīl* is 'its meaning' that He intended, Exalted be He. In reality, none know it except God, Splendid is His Majesty and there is no God other than Him. Everyone who has spoken about it has spoken according to what appeared to him, but no one was able to say that 'this [particular] meaning is God's intent' decisively. So after close scrutiny it turns out that the difference of opinion is just in the manner of expression. Therefore, many of the latter day examiners chose not to specify a particular interpretation in any specific one of the things that fit the phrase. They entrusted the specific intent to His knowledge, Exalted be He. This is a medial stance between the two approaches, a delight experienced between the two drinking pools, and Ibn Daqīq al-'Īd chose another position of moderation. He said, "If the interpretation is an example of the widely-used clear metaphor, then following it is to be done without hesitation. Or if it is an example of the irregular far-fetched metaphor, then the correct thing to do is to abandon it. If the two matters are equal, then the variance about its permissibility and non-admissibility is a matter of jurisprudence, subject to *ijtihād* and the case with respect to it is not one of peril with respect to either of the two factions. I, however, maintain neutrality in its regard due to the lack of preponderance of one of the sides, in addition to the fact that neutrality is supported by the view of the *Salaf*, and amongst them is the Greatest Imām (Abū Ḥanīfa)."

they come to understand transmitted information in accordance with human understanding and perception.

And Qāḍī [Abū Ya'lā] alluded to this with his saying, "It is permissible to understand and hold that which the One True God—Exalted be He—treaded upon in accordance with our principles, and that it is a characteristic that pertains to the Divine essence." But their principles according to his claim are based on human understanding.

If they had understood that God, Exalted be He, cannot be characterized by motion, translocation, or change, they would not have built their

He also says in *Sharḥ al-Mishkāt*, "The result is that both the *Salaf* and the *Khalaf* are interpreters because of their unanimous agreement on diverting the word from its literal meaning. However, the interpretation of the *Salaf* was non-specific because of their consignment of the meaning to God, Exalted be He. The interpretation of the *Khalaf* was detailed because they were compelled to do it as a result of the numerousness of heretics." In *Ishārāt al-Nabīh fī Kashf Shubah Ahl al-Tashbīh*, ("Hints for the Intelligent in Exposing the Doubts of the Anthropomorphists") the dictation of Shaykh Najm al-Dīn Abū Fatḥ Naṣr Allāh al-'Izz ibn Sa'd Allāh ibn Najm, the author from Baghdād, writes: "Scholars, philosophers and poets have exercised interpretation anciently and recently. For that reason one of them said, "I say: 'The cheek has a mole,' whenever I remember it—fearing the one watching, although the cheek really has no mole. I cry [with my face] to the East whenever their homes face the West, out of fear of gossip." Whoever says, "I neither accept the permissibility of interpretatioin nor do I liken God with His Creation," has actually employed *ta'wīl* because if he deviates from the meaning of 'the descent' in his view and the meaning of 'the right hand' [as] in the ḥadīth, "The Black Stone is God's right hand in the Earth," to [mean] other than that, he has indeed employed interpretation (*ta'wīl*). So there is no escape for you from [employing] *ta'wīl* by any means."

The most erudite Alūsī says in his exegesis during the discussion of the 'face,' "And the interpretation that is easily understood by the mind is the like of which is widely accepted in the speech of the Arabs which have no objection from me, even though some of the verses are of what the *Salaf* and the *Khalaf* have reached a consensus concerning [the obligation of] interpreting while God, Exalted in Highness, knows best His intent." He also said, "And I incline towards figurative interpretation (*ta'wīl*) and not to cling to the literal meanings while negating what is necessitated regarding some of what is ascribed to God like [in] His saying, *We shall devote Our attention to you, O men and Jinn!* (Qur'ān 55:31) and his saying, may God bless and grant him peace, "The Black Stone is God's right hand in the Earth, so whoever kisses it or touches it, it is as if he has shaken hands with God and kissed His right hand." I would make the discussion of it outside of the sphere of likening God to His Creation because of the existence of the justification for interpretation. I don't say: "The Black Stone is one of His attributes" similarly as the *Salaf* said about the right hand." Ibn al-Mu'lim designated a chapter in his book, *Najm al-Muhtadī wa Rajm al-Mu'tadī* ("Rise of the Guided and Expulsion of the Transgressor") where he enumerated the majority of those who chose to interpret the sense of the statement in what is apparent in it amongst the *saḥāba*, the *tābi'īn*, and others.

principles upon the ways that humans understand affairs. What is amazing is that he confirms this statement, and then he says, "This is without changing from one place to another and motion," thereby demolishing what he built.

One of the most astounding things that I have seen from them is what they mention about Ibn Abī Shayba, that he said in *Kitāb al-'Arsh*, "Verily God, Exalted be He, has informed us that He proceeded from the Earth to Heaven and from Heaven to the Throne. Then He became established on the Throne."

But we praise God, since He has not denied us our portion of narrations and the theoretical sciences. And we distance ourselves from people who have disgraced our *madhhab* to the point that people scolded us because of their comments.

The Thirty-Second Ḥadīth

Abū Umāma related that the Prophet ﷺ said, "The servants do not draw near to God, Exalted in Highness, with anything like what has come out of Him."[32] And what has come out is the Qur'ān. In the ḥadīth of 'Affān, it is narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said, "The virtue of the Qur'ān over all other speech is like the superiority of God, Exalted be He, over His creation. Verily the Qur'ān came from Him and to Him it will return."

The meaning is that it (the Qur'ān) reached us from Him and to Him it will return, and be raised up.

The Thirty-Third Ḥadīth

Abū Hurayra related that the Messenger of God ﷺ said, "Verily, God, Exalted be He, recited 'ṬāHā' and 'YāSīn' before creating Adam by one-thousand years. So when the angels heard this, they said, 'Blessings for a nation upon whom revelation is sent down! Blessings for hearts that bear this! And blessings for tongues that speak of it!' "

This is a fabricated and spurious ḥadīth. Ibrāhīm ibn al-Muhājir relates it from 'Umar ibn Ḥafṣ. As for 'Umar ibn Ḥafṣ, Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal said, "His ḥadīths were burned." Yaḥyā ibn Ma'īn said, "He is insignificant," while Abū Ḥātim ibn Ḥibbān al-Ḥāfiẓ said, "This is a spurious text."

[32] Suyūṭī writes in his *al-Jāmi' al-Kabīr*, "The servants do not draw near to God with anything more beloved to Him than from what has come out of Him." It is reported by Ibn Sunnī on the authority of Zayd ibn Arṭā from Abū Umāma.

The Thirty-Fourth Ḥadīth

Bukhārī and Muslim related in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* that Abū Hurayra narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Verily God created the creation and once He was finished with them the womb stood up, and then said, 'Is this the station of the one who takes refuge with You from the severance of the ties of kinship?' He replied, 'Yes. Are you not satisfied that I keep ties with he who keeps ties with you and I sever ties with he who severs ties with you?'" In one wording that Bukhārī reports, the Prophet ﷺ said, "Verily the womb is a branch from the All-Merciful One."

Abū 'Ubayd said, "*al-Shajna* is like the branch of the tree." What is meant by branch (*shajna*) is "kinship intertwined like the intertwining of roots." It is [also] said that trees are *tushjanu* when they become entangled into one another.

I would say that this ḥadīth is subject to either one of two interpretations. It either means that God, Exalted be He, maintains the womb to the point that He keeps ties with him who keeps ties with it. He then cuts off the one who severs ties with it and takes its right for it just as the relative maintains his kinship. So it is as if someone gives more consideration to relatives than he would to non-relatives. It could also mean that the [word] *raḥim* is [derived from] the [same] letters of [the name] "Al-Raḥmān" (The All-Merciful). So it is as if He has magnified its value by giving it this name.

The ḥadīth of 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn 'Awf confirms this where he relates that the Prophet ﷺ said that, "God, Exalted be He, said, I am *al-Raḥmān*. I created the womb (*raḥim*), and I have derived its name from My Name. So whoever keeps ties to it, I will keep ties with him. And whoever severs ties to it, I will sever ties with him."

This ḥadīth has been mentioned with a wording that has not been reported in the sound ḥadīth collections. It says, "The womb is a branch from the All-Merciful. It clings to the lower garment of the All-Merciful.

[33] In Imām Nawwawī's commentary on *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, he says, "Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ said: 'The womb (*raḥim*) that is connected to, severed from, and shown kindness is a particular characteristic. It is not a body, rather, it is kinship and lineage that a single womb unites to and part of it is connected to others. This connection was called "a womb." As for the [womb that is] a particular characteristic, it does not possess the capacity to stand and speak. So mentioning its standing up here and attaching is the coining of a similitude and a good metaphor as was the custom of the Arabs in utilizing that. The intent is to magnify its status and the virtues of those who keep ties to it and the gravity of the sin of those who sever ties with it through their disrepect."

says, 'O God! Keep ties with whoever keeps ties with me, and sever ties with whoever severs ties with me!'" In another narration it says, "The womb is a branch taking hold of the lower garment of the All-Merciful One." And yet in another narration it says, "When God, Exalted in Highness, created the creation the womb stood up. Then it took hold of the lower garment of the All-Merciful One, and then it said, 'This is the station of the one who takes refuge with You from the severance of ties.'"

All of these are examples that refer back to what we have explained. The meaning of it clinging to the lower garment of the All-Merciful One is "seeking shelter" and "protection."[34] Abū Bakr al-Bayhaqī said, "*Al-Ḥaqw* is the lower garment (*izār*), and the meaning is that it develops an attachment to His might." But, Ibn Ḥāmid said, "It is compulsory to believe that God has a lower garment, and that the womb takes hold of His lower garment." He said, "Likewise we believe that God, Exalted be He, has a 'side' as a result of His saying, Exalted be He: *over what I have neglected in God's side"* (Qur'ān 39:56).

This man has absolutely no understanding. How can negligence happen at the side of the Divine essence? We take refuge with God from having inappropriate beliefs [about Him]!

The Thirty-Fifth Ḥadīth

Bukhārī related in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*[35] that the Prophet ﷺ said, "God, Mighty and Majestic, says, 'Pride is my cloak, and Greatness is my lower garment. So whoever contests with me in them I will punish him.'"

Abū Sulaymān Khaṭṭābī said, "And in the statement, verily pride and greatness are two attributes of God, Exalted be He, of which He has exclusive possession. No one shares with Him in them, and it is not proper for a created being to assume them, because the attributes of the creation

[34] He said in *al-Nihāya*, "And there is a metaphor and depiction expressed through the use of the word 'lower garment.' An example of it is: 'I take refuge with *fulān's* lower garment' when you seek refuge with him and take protection." It is mentioned in *Asās al-Balāgha*: "He took shelter with his loins" when he fled to him."

[35] 'Ajlūni says in *Kashf al-Khafā wa Muzīl al-Ilbās 'ammā ishtahara min al-Aḥādīth 'alā Alsinat al-Nās*, ("Removing Obscurity and Confusion from the Ḥadīths that have Become Commonplace to Hear from the Tongues of People") Muslim, Ibn Ḥibbān, Abū Dāwūd, and Ibn Māja related it from Abū Hurayra as well as Ḥākim [with similar wording]. One of those who reported it with the wording of the chapter title is Quḍā'ī from Abū Hurayra as well as al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī from Anas." And he did not mention Bukhārī. So let it be noted.

are humility and tractability. So He coined the the statement about the lower garment and cloak as a form of similitude."

It is as if God is saying—and He, Exalted be He—knows best, just as no one can share a man's cloak and lower garment with him [while he is wearing it], likewise no created thing can share with Him in Pride and Greatness.

The Thirty-Sixth Ḥadīth

Bukhārī and Muslim related in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* that Abū Hurayra reported that the Prophet ﷺ said, "I am as my My servant thinks of Me, and I am with him when he mentions Me. So if He mentions Me to himself, I mention him to Myself, and if he mentions Me in an assembly, I mention him in an assembly better than it. And if he draws near to me a hand's span, I draw near to him an arm's span. And if he comes to me walking [at a normal pace], I come to him walking [quickly]."

Qāḍi [Abū Ya'lā] held the view that God, Exalted be He, has a self. It is an attribute added to the Divine essence. This is the statement of a heretic who has numerous instances where he likens God to His creation. No distinction is made between the essence and the Self.

What is it that prevents the meaning from being, "I—*Myself*—[not another] mentioned him?" This was presented during the discussion of the verses, and the mention of approximation and walking fast are a broadening in speech[36] (a metaphor) like His saying, Exalted in Highness: *And those who moved quickly in Our signs* (Qur'ān 22:51) while walking is not what is intended.

The Thirty-Seventh Ḥadīth

Abū Sa'īd related that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Verily God, Exalted be He, is beautiful and He loves beauty."[37]

[36] It is mentioned in Ibn Qutayba's *Ta'wīl Mukhtalaf al-Ḥadīth* during the discussion of the 'drawing near' and the 'fast walking,' that: "We say, 'Verily this is a depiction and a metaphor. He only meant whoever comes to Me quickly, I will bring him the reward faster than he came.'"

[37] 'Ajlūnī confirmed this ḥadīth in *Kashf al-Khafā wa Muzīl al-Ilbās*. He said, "Aḥmad related it from Abū Rayḥāna, and Muslim and Tirmidhi related it from Ibn Mas'ūd. Abū Ya'lā and Bayhaqī related it from Abū Sa'īd, and Ṭabarānī related it from Abū Umāma, Ibn 'Umar, and Jābir, and Ibn 'Adī related it from Ibn 'Umar."

The scholars have said, "It means He is the One who [illegible] giving beauty, morals and good treatment to forms." In my view, "The Beautiful One" is the one whose characteristics are perfect and deemed beautiful. But, Qāḍī [Abū Ya'lā] gave an explanation that is not befitting the One True God, Glorified and Exalted be He. He said, "It is not forbidden to describe Him with possessing beauty. For verily, that is a reference to the Divine essence, since *jamāl* takes on the meaning of 'beauty.'" And the Prophet's statement ﷺ "I saw my Lord in the most beautiful form," has already been discussed.

The Thirty-Eighth Ḥadīth

Qāḍī [Abū Ya'lā] related that 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz said, "When God, Exalted be He, has finished with the People of Paradise and the People of the Fire, He will proceed to walk in canopies of clouds and angels. Then He will stop on the first level and greet them [with peace], and they will return the greeting to Him. Then He will say, 'Ask Me,' and they will say, 'What should we ask? By Your Might, Majesty, and Elevation in the Highness of Your place, if you had dispensed among us the sustenance all of humans and *Jinn*, we would have fed them and given them drink, and it would not diminish what we have.' Then He will say, Exalted be He, 'Surely ask Me!' They will say, 'We ask You for your satisfaction.' He will say, Exalted be He, 'My satisfaction has given you residence in the abode of My Nobility.' Then He will do this with the inhabitants of every level until He reaches His sitting place."

This is a ḥadīth concocted against 'Umar, and furthermore, how can he affirm an attribute for God, Exalted be He, by the statement of 'Umar? Qāḍī [Abū Ya'lā] said, "His saying, Exalted be He: *God comes to them in the canopies of the clouds* (Qur'ān 2:210) testifies for the ḥadīth of 'Umar." But he did not realize that the meaning is "God will come to them *with* the canopies of clouds."

The Thirty-Ninth Ḥadīth

It was related that 'Ā'isha, may God be pleased with her, said, "The Messenger of God ﷺ was asked about the praiseworthy station. He said, 'My Lord, Mighty and Majestic, has promised me to sit me on the Throne.'"

This ḥadīth is not soundly established on the authority of the Messenger of God ﷺ. Despite this, Ibn Ḥāmid said, "It is compulsory to believe in the

physical contact that has been mentioned about it and the close proximity from the One True God—Exalted be He—of His Prophet ﷺ when He seats him on the Throne." He [also] said, "And Ibn 'Umar recited: *Verily he will have with Us closeness'* (Qur'ān 38:25). Ibn Ḥāmid then said, "God mentioned that he will be so close to Him that he will touch part of Him." But this is a lie against Ibn 'Umar, and whoever believes in the division of the Divine essence has become an unbeliever according to the consensus.

The Fortieth Ḥadīth

Dāraquṭnī related from the ḥadīth of Abū Isḥāq from 'Abd Allāh ibn Khalīfa from 'Umar, may God be pleased with him, that a woman came to the Messenger of God ﷺ and said, "Call on God, Exalted be He, that He will admit me into Paradise." So he extolled the greatness of God, Mighty and Majestic, and then said, "Verily His seat encompasses the Heavens and Earth, and verily, it has a creaking similar to that of the new saddle when He mounts because of His weightiness."

This ḥadīth varies a great deal in other narrations. Abū Isḥāq related it from Ibn Khalīfa from Ibn 'Umar. He (Ibn 'Umar) said, "When He sits on the chair (*kursī*), Blessed and Exalted be He, a creaking is heard from it like that of the saddle." Ibn Jarīr related that 'Abd Allāh ibn Khalīfa said, "The Messenger of God ﷺ said, 'Verily His chair encompasses the Heavens and Earth, and verily, He sits on it. So what additional space is left of it is the measure of four fingers.'" Then he [the Prophet] said, "[...] according to the measurement of His finger." And, it appeared that he put together his fingers [to illustrate that measurement]. He then said "Verily the chair has a crackling like that of the saddle, when God mounts it because of His weightiness."

This last version is contrary to the first version,[38] and this is because of the transmitter's own confusion and bad memory. The more fitting interpretation is, "So not even the measure of four fingers of additional space remains." The meaning is that He has filled it with His Awesomeness and Greatness.

[38] Translator: What the author means here by the last version being contrary to the first version is a reference to the *isnād* (chain of transmission), not the text of the ḥadīth. The first ḥadīth is related by Abū Isḥāq from 'Abd Allāh ibn Khalīfa from 'Umar from the Prophet ﷺ whereas the last version is related from 'Abd Allāh ibn Khalīfa directly from the Prophet ﷺ. 'Abd Allāh ibn Khalīfa was a successor who never met the Prophet ﷺ. As for the other version of the ḥadīth, Ibn Khalīfa relates it from Ibn 'Umar, instead of 'Umar, may God be pleased with both of them.

This happens to be the coining of a similitude about the scope of the Creator's greatness, Splendid is His Majesty. The saying of the transmitters, "When He sits down" and "When He sits up" is the result of their own tampering [with the words of the reports] and from expressing what they believe to be the case, just as those who said about [God's saying]: *Then He became established on the Throne* (Qur'ān 7:54) [to be] "He sat" [on the Throne]. We objected to this, because it is not permissible with respect to the Creator, Exalted be He, that God be characterized as sitting to the point that that particular object is in excess, since that is one of the qualities of composite bodies.

The Forty-First Ḥadīth

Bukhārī and Muslim related in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* that Abu Sa'īd narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said, "God, Mighty and Majestic, will say on the Day of Resurrection, 'O Adam!' He will say, 'At your service and disposal!' Then a voice will call out, 'Verily God, Exalted be He, orders you to bring forward from your progeny a deployment to the Fire.'"

Ḥafṣ ibn Ghayyāth was the only narrator to mention the word "voice," and Wakī', Jarīr, and others contradicted him. They did not mention "the voice." And Imām Aḥmad was asked about Hafs and he said, "He used to mix up his ḥadīths." In a sound ḥadīth it states, "Whenever God speaks of revelation, the inhabitants of Heaven hear something like the dragging of a chain on *Ṣafā*." And in the ḥadīth of Ibn Mas'ūd it states, "Whenever God speaks of revelation, the inhabitants of Heaven hear a clattering like the dragging of a chain on *Ṣafā*." There does not exist in the sound narrations, "The inhabitants of Heaven hear a voice."

The Forty-Second Ḥadīth

Jābir related about the Prophet ﷺ that when God spoke to Moses the day on the mount, He addressed him with a different type of speech by which He spoke to him on the day that He summoned him. Then He said to him, "O Moses! Verily I spoke to you with the strength of ten thousand tongues. And I possess the strength of all tongues. And I am even stronger than that." So when he returned to the Children of Israel they said, "Describe to us the speech of the All-Merciful One." He said, "I cannot." They said, "Then make an approximation for us." Moses said, "Have you

not witnessed the sound of thunderbolts that draw near with the sweetest speech that you have ever heard?"

This ḥadīth is not soundly established. 'Alī ibn 'Āṣim relates it from al-Faḍl ibn 'Īsā. Nasā'ī said, "'Alī ibn 'Āṣim is relinquished in ḥadīth," and Yazīd ibn Hārūn said, "We know him to be a liar."

The Forty-Third Ḥadīth

Qāḍī [Abū Ya'lā] related from Ḥasān ibn 'Aṭiyya that he said, "The prostrating person prostrates on the foot of the All-Merciful One."

This is the statement of a disciple of one of the Prophet's companions and it is a similitude indicative of "The closeness the one has to God's grace Exalted be He." But Qāḍī [Abū Ya'lā] affirmed the attribute of "a foot" by this, and that he literally prostrates on His foot, but without making contact

The Forty-Fourth Ḥadīth

Bukhārī and Muslim related in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* that Abū Mūsā narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said, "There are two gardens. Its containers and all therein are made of silver. And there is nothing between the people and seeing their Lord except the cloak of pride on His face in the Garden of Eden."

The onlooker is in a Garden of Eden, not the one seen, because places do not encompass Him. But Qāḍī [Abū Ya'lā] said, "The apparent meaning of the ḥadīth is that the one seen is in a garden of eternal abode." This is clear anthropomorphism!

The cloak of pride is what God possesses of Pride and Greatness. It is as if God denied those in the Garden [from seeing Him] due to His greatness, but, if He wanted, He would unveil Himself for them. We have already discussed the "face" in the verses. There, we mentioned that the intent is "Him" (the face means "Him").

The Forty-Fifth Ḥadīth

Bukhārī and Muslim related in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* that Abū Hurayra narrated that the Messenger of God ﷺ said, "When God, Exalted be He, completed the creation He wrote in His book that is with Him[39] above the Throne,

[39] The most erudite 'Aynī said in *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, "The with-ness does not denote place, rather, it is an allusion to His perfect state in that He is concealed from the creation elevated beyond the sphere of their comprehension."

Verily My Mercy has conquered My Wrath.'" And in one version it states, "My Mercy has surpassed My Wrath."

Qāḍī [Abū Ya'lā] said, "The outward meaning of his saying, 'with Him,' is indicative of 'closeness to the Divine essence.'" But know that closeness to the One True God, Exalted be He, is not determined by distance. That is one of the special qualities of composite bodies. And He, Exalted be He, has said about the punishment sent to Lot's people that it is: [...] *marked with your Lord* [...] (Qur'ān 51:34).

The Forty-Sixth Ḥadīth

It was related that one of the disciples of the Prophet's companions said, "God created Adam with His hand. He wrote the Torah with His hand. And He planted [the seeds of the garden of] *Firdaws* with His hand."

This [ḥadīth] has not been confirmed on the authority of the one who related it, and we have already discussed His saying, Exalted in Highness: [...] *what I created with My hands* (Qur'ān 38:75).

The Forty-Seventh Ḥadīth

Ibn 'Abbās related that the Prophet ﷺ said regarding His saying, Exalted in Highness: *His chair* (*Kursī*) *encompasses the Heavens and Earth* (Qur'ān 2:255) that, "His *Kursī* is the place of His feet. As for the *'Arsh*, its scope cannot be estimated."

A group of reliable transmitters related it, and designated it to Ibn 'Abbās. One of the transmitters, Shujā' ibn Makhlad,[40] elevated it [to the Prophet]. Because of his opposition to the distinguished masters [in this matter] he is known to be mistaken.

The meaning of the ḥadīth is that the *Kursī* is small with respect to the 'Arsh like the measure of a footrest, which has been placed for the feet of the one sitting on the throne with respect to a throne. Ḍahhāk said, "The *Kursī* is that which kings place their feet upon." But, Qāḍī [Abū Ya'lā] said, "The foot is the foot of the Divine essence. And it is that which He will place in the Fire."

[40] Ḥāfiẓ ibn Ḥajar says in *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb*, "Shujā' ibn Makhlad al-Fallās Abū al-Faḍl al-Balkhī the guest of Baghdād is veracious. He made a miscalculation in one ḥadīth. He elevated it to the Messenger while it was designated to a particular companion. So 'Aqīlī mentioned him in *al-Ḍu'afā* for that."

The Forty-Eighth Ḥadīth

'Abbās narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Above the seventh Heaven is a sea. What is between its top and its bottom is the like of what is between Heaven and Earth, and God, Exalted be He, is above that."

This ḥadīth is not soundly established. Yaḥyā ibn al-'Alā was the only one to report it. Imām Aḥmad said, "He is a liar. He fabricates ḥadīths." And we have already spoken about "the overness" in His Words, Exalted be He: *And He is the Irresistible One, over His servants* (Qur'ān 6:18). But, Qāḍī [Abū Ya'lā] said, "The meaning intended by being 'over' is that the Divine essence (of God) is mounted on the Throne." As for this comment, its foundation is the belief that God is corporeal!

The Forty-Ninth Ḥadīth

Bukhārī and Muslim related in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* that Abū Hurayra narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Whoever gives charity the equivalent of a date from a wholesome earning—and God only accepts the wholesome—God will accept it with His right hand. Then He will make it grow for its proprietor just as one of you makes his colt grow, until it becomes like the mountain." And in a wording reported by Muslim [it says], "Then it will grow in the palm of the All-Merciful One until it is larger than the mountain."

The scholars have said, "This is an address to people according to what they recognize and understand from the words 'acceptance, breeding, and growth.' And since 'taking' happens through the hand and 'grasping' happens with the palm, he addressed them with what they would comprehend. So mention of the right hand occurred merely because it has been designated to perform monumental tasks. And the meaning of 'breeding' is 'multiplication.'"

The Fiftieth Ḥadīth

Bukhārī and Muslim related in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* from the ḥadīth of Anas ibn Mālik about the Prophet ﷺ that the Anti-Christ was mentioned. So he said: "Verily he is one-eyed. And verily your Lord is not one-eyed."[41]

[41] The wording of the ḥadīth in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* is, "Verily God is not one-eyed," and he pointed with his hand to his eye, saying: "And verily the *Dajjāl* (Anti-Christ) is blind in the right eye." Ḥāfiẓ ibn Ḥajar said, "Verily pointing to his eye, God bless and grant him peace, is merely a reference to the eye of the *Dajjāl*. 'For verily it used to be healthy like this one, then blindness befell it due to his excessive lying about the claim of divinity.' So he used to have a healthy eye like this one. Then imperfection befell it, and he was not able to repel that from himself." Fakhr al-Rāzī said in *Asās al-Taqdīs*, in relation to this ḥadīth: "And as for this report, it is problematic, because its apparent meaning necessitates that the Prophet ﷺ manifested the difference between God, Exalted in Highness, and the *Dajjāl* by way of the *Dajjāl* being one-eyed and God not being one-eyed. But that is far-fetched, and whenever the non-concurrent report reaches this level of weakness in meaning, it is obligatory to believe that the statement was preceded by an introduction that if it were mentioned, the confusion would disappear. Isn't the narrator of this ḥadīth Ibn 'Umar? And, what is well known is that when Ibn 'Umar mentioned the ḥadīth, 'Verily the deceased is punished by the crying of his family,' 'Ā'isha, may God be pleased with her, scolded him, and mentioned that this statement from the Messenger was preceded by another statement. She used as an argument for that His saying, Exalted in Highness: *And the bearer of a burden will not bear the burden of another* (Qur'ān 53:38). If this had been related, the problem would have disappeared. So likewise, here, it is of a remote likelihood that the like of this statement would issue from the Messenger."

The scholars have said, "He merely meant to manifest the truth about his description in that imperfection is not possible in His regard. He did not intend to affirm a limb, because there is no point of praise in affirming a limb. Rather it is as if he said, 'Verily your Lord is not a possessor of limbs of which imperfections befall.'"

This is also a similitude for the purpose of negating a child from Him, since division is impossible with respect to Him. And if the statement were referring to "a perfect form," there would be no proof of divinity in either that, or in the foot, since the "perfect in form" are many. Thus if someone were to hold this position on God possessing a form, He would have an equal.

The Fifty-First Ḥadīth

Bukhārī related in his *Afrād* that Abū Hurayra narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Verily God, Exalted in Highness, said: 'My servant continues to draw near to Me with voluntary acts until I love him. Then when I love him, I am his hearing by which he hears, his sight by which he sees, his hand by which he strikes, and his foot by which he walks. And I am not reluctant about anything that I do as much as I am about [taking] the soul of the believer. He hates death. And I hate to disappoint him.'"

As for His saying, "I am his hearing and his seeing," it is a metaphor. It has four different renderings, the first of them being, "I am like his hearing and seeing. So he loves obeying me just as much as he loves these senses."

The second is that, "His entire being is preoccupied with Me, so he does not pay attention to what displeases Me, and he only looks at what I command him to."

The third is that, "I obtain for him his objectives just as he obtains them by his hearing, vision, and hand which aid him." As for the "lack of resolve," it is an address made to us according to what we comprehend.

The Fifty-Second Ḥadīth

Jubayr ibn Muṭ'im related that, "A Bedouin came to the Messenger of God ﷺ and said, 'O Messenger of God! The people are exhausted, the dependants are hungry, the wealth has been ravished, and the cattle have died. So request rain from God for us. Then I will seek intercession through God to you." So the Messenger of God ﷺ said, 'Woe to you! Do you know what you are saying?' So the Messenger of God glorified God and he did not stop glorifying Him until his companions recognised that [discontent] in his face. God's prestige is greater than that. Woe to you! Do you know what God is? Verily His Throne is over His Heavens like this,' and he made his fingers into the shape of a dome. [He continued and said] 'Verily it creaks because of Him as the saddle does from the one mounting it.'"

And the meaning of his saying, "Do you know what God is?" is, "Do you know what God's Greatness and Majesty are?" And the meaning of, "It creaks because of Him" is that "it is incapacitated by His Greatness and Majesty," since it is known that the saddle creaks from the one who mounts merely because of the strength of what is over it and its inability to bear it.

So he brought the understanding closer to the comprehension from himself with this type of similitude with what means "God's Greatness" and "His Majesty" so that it would be known that the one characterized by Highness in stature cannot be made an intercessor to he who is below him in rank. And we have already mentioned in what has passed from Qāḍī [Abū Ya'lā] when he stated, "It creaks because of the weightiness of the Divine essence"—and this is clear anthropomorphism!

The Fifty-Third Ḥadīth

Abū Hurayra related that, "The Prophet ﷺ once recited: *Verily God is always All-Hearing, All-Seeing* (Qur'ān 4:58) and then he placed his finger and thumb over his eyes and ears."

The scholars have said, "He meant by this gesture to indicate the factual existence of the hearing and sight that belong to God. So he pointed to the two parts of the body that are the faculties of hearing and vision, not to [mean] that God, Glorified and Exalted is He, has a limb."

The Fifty-Fourth Ḥadīth

Abū al-Dardā related that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Verily God, Mighty and Majestic, descends during the last three hours that remain of the night. So He opens the *Dhikr* (another name for the Preserved Tablet [*al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfūẓ*]) in the first hour, and erases what He pleases and establishes [what He pleases]. Then He descends in the second hour to the Garden of Eden. In it is His abode in which none but He resides, and it is His habitat. Then He says, 'Blessings for he who enters it.' Then He descends in the third hour to the sky of the ephemeral world along with His spirit and His angels. Then He says, 'By my might!'"

Ziyāda ibn Muḥammad al-Anṣārī relates this ḥadīth. Bukhārī said, "He is rejected in ḥadīth." Abū Ḥātim ibn Ḥibbān said, "He reports objectionable narrations from notable transmitters, so he deserves to be left alone." We say, while presuming the soundness [of the ḥadīth], it is used in the possessive form to indicate His ownership of it (the habitat) in the same way that the word house in the "House of God" was used to indicate His ownership of it. So this is His house and that is His habitat. We only said this because "the habitat" is impossible with respect to Him, Glorified and Exalted be He.

The Fifty-Fifth Ḥadīth

Abū Umāma related that the Prophet ﷺ said, "My Lord has promised me that seventy-thousand and three handfuls of my nation will enter Paradise."

The handful (*Hathya*) is the measure of a full hand, and the intent from mentioning it is to bring the meaning close to our minds through what we comprehend, not the literal meaning of *Hathya*.

The Fifty-Sixth Ḥadīth

Abū Umāma related that the Messenger of God ﷺ said, "Verily God will sit on the Day of Resurrection on the bridge between Heaven and Hell."

'Uthmān ibn 'Ātika relates it. It has been reported on the authority of Yaḥyā [that he said], "He ('Uthmān) is insignifant."

The Fifty-Seventh Ḥadīth

Qāḍī [Abū Ya'lā] related about Muḥammad ibn Ka'b, that he said, "When the people used to hear the Qur'ān from the mouth of the All-Merciful One they had never heard it before then."

Qāḍī [Abū Ya'lā] said, "It is permissible for the 'mouth' to be applied to Him." This is absolutely unbelievable! "Fī al-Raḥmān" literally means, "His mouth!" so he affirms an attribute for God, Exalted be He, with the statement of a disciple of one of the Prophet's companions, even though the narration has not been confirmed on his authority! This is one of the most disparaging things!

As for the ḥadīth that has passed on the authority of Abū Umāma about the Messenger of God ﷺ who said, "The servants do not draw near to me with anything like what has come out of Me," it means, "What appeared from Him." It is not permissible to believe that it is like the exiting of one physical object from another object.

The Fifty-Eighth Ḥadīth

It has been related to us on the authority of Sahl ibn Sa'd that the Messenger of God ﷺ said, "Below God, Exalted be He, are seventy-thousand veils of light and darkness. And no soul hears anything about the beauty of those veils except that it will die."

This ḥadīth has no source.[42]

The Fifty-Ninth Ḥadīth

Anas related that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Verily God, Exalted be He, has a Tablet. On one side is a pearl and the other side is a sapphire. Its [or His] pen is light. In it [is written] 'He creates [such and such], and with it [it is written] 'He provides' [such and such], and with it [it is written] He gives life [to so and so] and with it [it is written] 'He brings death, and He gives might [to so and so] and 'He debases' [so and so], and 'He does what He pleases' [to such and such and so and so] on a [particular] day and night."

[42] Translator: In other words, it is not found in any of the well-known ḥadīth collections.

This is a spurious ḥadīth. Muḥammad ibn 'Uthmān relates it, and he is renounced in ḥadīth.

The Sixtieth Ḥadīth

Jābir related that the Prophet ﷺ said, "When you see the wind do not revile it, for verily it is from the breath of the All-Merciful One. It brings mercy and it brings punishment. So ask God for the good of it, and seek refuge with God from its evil."

The "breath" (*nafas*) means, "Removing worry from the distressed."[43] And like it is what Abū Hurayra related about the Messenger of God ﷺ who said, "Verily I feel the breath of your Lord from the direction of Yemen." He means, "His relief from distress through the People of Medina's support of me." And Medina is from the direction of Yemen, and this is something that the Muslims do not differ about.

But, Ibn Ḥāmid said, "I found some of our comrades affirming a characteristic for God in His essence that He breathes." He said, "And they said, 'The winds that blow like the gale, the barren wind, the south wind, the north wind, the east wind, and the west wind are all created except for a wind that is amongst His attributes. It possesses an imaginary breeze, and it is from the breath of the All-Merciful One.'"

May God damn the one who believes this, because he affirms a created body for the Lord! Those who believe this are not Muslims!

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I would also like to make mention that when a group of the fools gained knowledge of this book of mine it did not please them, since they were familiar with the words of their leaders who compare God with His Creation. They attempted to defend themselves by saying, "This [does not represent] the *madhhab* [of Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥanbal]."[44]

Indeed, it is not your *madhhab*, nor the *madhhab* of your shaykhs you have emulated. I have cleared any charges against the *madhhab* of Imām Aḥmad and from him the false narrations and the raving statements while

[43] Zamakhsharī says in *Asās al-Balāgha*, "And [when it is said] 'I don't have a breath' it means 'a relief.'" Ibn Qutayba said: "And God relieved His Prophet ﷺ from distress through the wind on the Day of the Confederates. He says, Exalted in Highness: *So We sent against them a wind and forces they didn't see* (Qur'ān 33:9)."

[44] Translator: This would indicate that this version is a shorter version written by Ibn al-Jawzī after *Kitāb Akhbār al-Ṣifāt* which is the version translated by Swartz.

not opting *taqlīd* (the following of qualified scholarship without knowing the evidences) in what I believe. How could I not discard counterfeit money while I am paying [real] cash?[45]

I would like to leave you with the following poem: "I have surpassed, while praising God, those who were before me/So say to he who hopes to catch me, Take your time!/If you had lessened your criticism/It would be hard after searching to find one quite like me.

I then say to you an elongated *Qaṣīda* (tripartite poem). It states the following:

I have praised my God. And how not when He has the grace?
For He has befriended me and the paths have become tractable for me.
He brought me forth from my family while endowed with understanding
And taught me knowledge by which my value is made priceless.
He motivated me towards the noble traits that I possess
So my soul's fervor forever and ever increases.
He inspired me to acquire knowledge until I possessed it
Then the bitterness of perseverance became sweet in my mouth.
And He increased my passion for the sciences, and then they became
Like the statue of Layla with respect to Qays so that he wouldn't forget.
And of all the disciplines that God has scattered about amongst mortals
To His creatures there is not one except that I have with them some sort of connection.
I have written what other people have written the like of
So, O seekers of justice, to me
Give distinction and test me!
And of intuitive statements I have marvels
That jump back at them, and the longer they are the sweeter.
My knowledge steered me to abstinence regarding the lowlier things
And these two characteristics are only combined in a servant who possesses virtue.
Yes! And the fear of God is the most honorable friendship
And there is no good in a statement when action is wasted.
My satisfaction with what suffices me is my certainty

[45] Translator: In other words, he is saying: *Taqlīd* in matters of creed is counterfeit money, and evidence is the real cash. In the publication in my possession, what I have translated as, "And how could I not discard counterfeit money while I'm paying [real] cash?" to read "and how could I discard counterfeit money while I'm paying in [real] cash?" I believe that it is a mistake on part of the publisher whereas it appears that he has omitted the word 'لا' indicative of the negative.

From being afflicted with injury
And after me having certainty about the things that have been measured out,
There is no humiliation.
So be good to a knowledge that has flung its proprietor
Into the falsehood of a creature with whom ignorance is equated.
And He made my heart a place for the love of every champion of truth
I loved passionately just as eyes can passionately love offspring.
Baghdād is an abode in which its people are not duped
And their love is only for he who has prestige.
And in all of the lands, my virtues have freighted them
The devout, the rugged, [and] the soft have all acknowledged my excellence.
My mention with virtue beyond the River is abundant
And in the far West and wherever camels have reached.
And when I looked at all of the madhhabs
Pursued the straightest in correctness and what they lauded.
So I found, after probing, that the view of Ibn Ḥanbal
Surpasses all of the madhhabs. Rather it towers over them.
Everything that he said is supported
By a sound tradition. And ḥadīth is the foundation.
He was, regarding the transmission of knowledge, the most knowledgeable of those who transmitted
He delivers the news even if an obscurity mars it.
And his madhhab is not to equate anything with his Lord
And he follows in submission those who passed before.
So the envious one from every part stood up against him
Then he stood up on the foot of firmness while they slipped.
And he had true followers coming successively
O the many they gave direction towards guidance and to you they showed the way!
Then a group of people came claiming the adoption of a madhhab
In accord with his madhhab.
Not every branch has a root.
So not in the branches of Fiqh do they stand firm in his support
And they have beyond what he said a preoccupation.
When they debate they take the stance of a warrior
What astonishment when all of the people are unarmed!
Their analogising is irregular whenever they proceed with it
And they are in the sciences of transmission lacking.
If there isn't one possessing intelligence regarding transmitted knowledge

Vipers resemble one another. So the robe is severed.
And they inclined towards anthropomorphism while adopting the apparent form of
That which they transmitted regarding the attributes and they were heedless.
And they said, "What we say is the madhhab of Aḥmad"
And those possessing ignorance inclined to giving them credence.
The opponents started saying that we were
Those who compared God with His Creation.
The comrades and friends have hurt us.
They have disgraced that Imām by way of their ignorance
While his madhhab is exoneration.
But they are loners.
By my life! I have met true scholars from their midst
While most of those I met lack intelligence.
I continue to clean away from them every property
Of the despicable creed so that unity can be achieved.
They were designated with titles while they have no knowledge
Their morals have neither sacred precincts nor free districts.
On their tables the vinegar doesn't join with its herbs
And if you will, 'There's neither vineger nor herbs on them.'
And the most envious of us are the people of my madhhab
So if they were able they'd pass a verdict that my blood is lawful.
They wish out of ignorance that my sandal would slip
While not one foot of theirs has walked before in glory like me.
And since the Shaykh of the party, Aḥmad, has passed away
Until now there hasn't existed an equal to your scholar.
A thousand thousands (one million) have spent the night with me standing
The clouds of my exhortation, each of them is a storm cloud and moisture.
And all the gardens of my knowledge exult the fruits
And their garden, when you observe it, is strengthened.
So what do you think is the cure for the envious and his sickness?
If the experienced doctor is asked about him he forgets him?
An opponent is alone in his disgusting hatred
Is not the people's uniting behind me a just witness?

"The Attributes of God" is complete. In the last lesson of "The Negation of Anthropomorphism" of the Dictations of Ḥāfiẓ Abū al-Qāsim 'Alī ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Hibat Allāh al-Shāfi'ī, I say, "Abū 'Abd Allāh ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Manṣūr al-Mu'ammil linafsihī sung to us:

God is greater than for there to be for His essence
A description like the essences of His creatures.
Or for His attributes to be equated, in all of what
We manifest from our actions, to His attributes.
Be there Destruction for the possessor of folly who says that He is
A composite body and that our characteristics are like
His characteristics!
The uniqueness of His fashioning, to Him, are witnesses
That appear on the surface of all that He made.
He dispersed the human race with an eternal power
And He willed it in them for His decrees.
And He saw with the eye of knowledge what would bring
The glances of their eyes as well as what they would not bring.